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JOURNAL

of the Travellers' Aid Society

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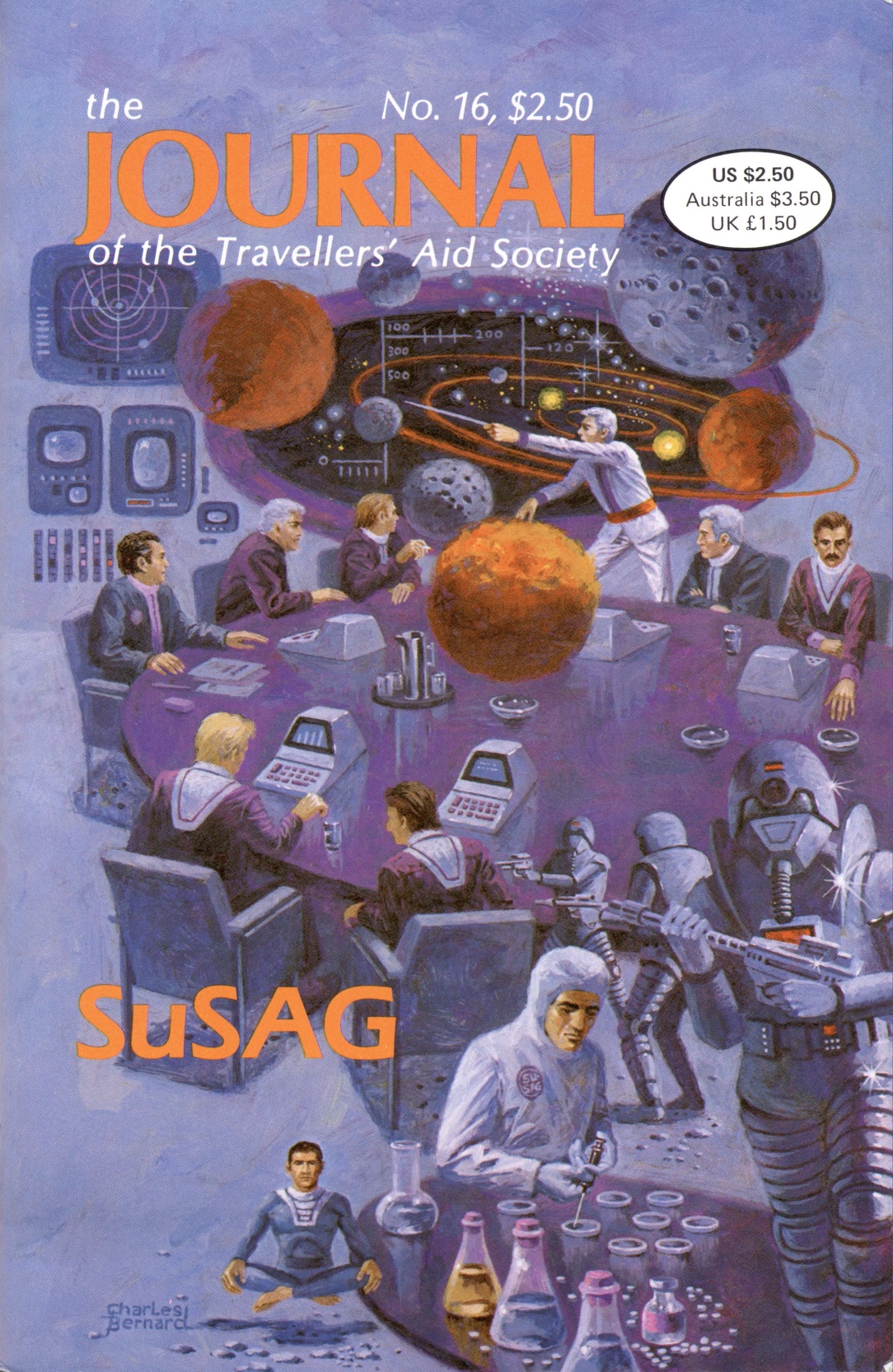

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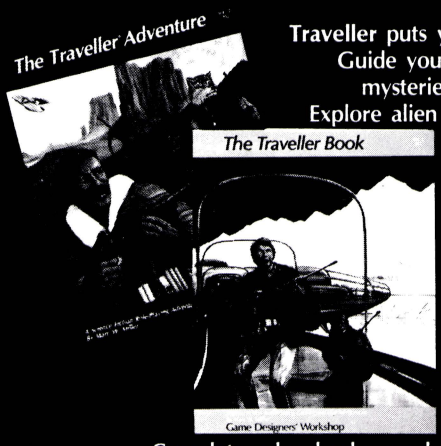

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JOURNAL

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The *Journal of the Travellers' Aid Society* is Game Designers' Workshop's registered trademark for its science fiction gaming magazine devoted to **Traveller.**

Traveller is Game Designers' Workshop's registered trademark for its role-playing game of science fiction adventure set in the far future.

Dates in this issue of the *Journal* are given in accordance to an arbitrary Imperial calendar of 365 days. The date consists of a three-digit day number (the current day of the year) a dash, and a four digit number (showing the current year since the founding of the Imperium).

The date of this issue is **119-1109**, or the 119th day of the 1109th year of the Imperium.

The *Journal of the Travellers' Aid Society* is a science fiction magazine devoted to **Traveller**, GDW's role-playing game set in the far future.

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WINNER — H. G. WELLS AWARD: BEST MAGAZINE COVERING ROLE-PLAYING, 1981

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Advertisers should inquire for an advertising rate card.

Submissions: We welcome articles and illustrations for the **Journal.** Please inquire before submitting manuscripts, enclosing a stamped, self-addressed envelope; we will send manuscript guideline and format sheets.

From the Management

This issue, I thought those of you who actually bother to read *From the Management* might appreciate a short look at the way the Workshop operates, at least with reference to the *Journal.* This FTM will be quite a bit longer than usual, but I hope the readership will find the topic worth the space.

First, the cast of characters (contrary to rumor, all this work is not done by elves):

Loren Wiseman (that's me) performs all editorial functions, and most of those of a publisher too. I determine editorial policy, read all article submissions and make the final decision upon their suitability for publication, typeset the magazine, and coordinate everything that needs coordinating. I write the *Journal's* advertisements in other magazines, and am in charge of getting outside advertising in the *Journal.* I also advise Chris Purcell on which artists to commission for covers and interior illustrations (she sometimes takes my advice), bully GDW staffers into writing articles, and try to answer as many letters as I have time for after I complete my other duties. A note to budding authors who think I am hard to please: even Marc has had articles rejected by me. Don't give up!

Marc Miller's rather unorthodox title *spiritual advisor* on the *Journal's* masthead has prompted some to write to ask what it is Marc does for (or to) the *Journal.* Aside from occasionally glancing at articles in various stages of completion, Marc normally does not see each issue until shortly after it is printed, at which time he presents me with a number of compliments and criticisms in the form of marginal notes. Now and then, Marc writes articles. Often, these are published (see above).

Darlene File is in charge of *Journal* subscriptions and customer complaints. She oversees the maintenance of the mailing list, and sees to it that subscribers whose copies are lost or damaged receive replacements. Also, Darlene proofreads the *Journal* after I typeset it.

Chris Purcell is the *Journal's* art director. She decides what artists do drawings and paintings for the magazine, designs the layout of the magazine (what typeface is used for titles, what color ink is to be used, where the drawings go, etc.), and either does the paste-up for the magazine herself or oversees it. Chris delivers the magazine into the hands of the printer.

John Harshman is in charge of the internal consistency and logic of the **Traveller** universe. He advises me on the suitability of articles for publication, critiques the magazine in general, and constantly nags me to improve my spelling and grammar. John, Chris, and I inspect the proofs of the magazine before it is printed.

Bill Stone is in charge of sales, and it is his job to see to it that people buy the *Journal.* Teresa Montgomery bills people for the *Journals* after they buy them, and for any advertising they have placed in the magazine.

The *Journals* are shipped to you or your store by our capable warehouse crew, including Larry Butts, Bob Bogaert, Kathy Zeidenstein, Tim Brown, and others too numerous to mention.

Frank Chadwick has no direct involvement with the *Journal,* but will occasionally write an article or two.

Of course, everyone on this list has other, non-*Journal* related duties to perform. I am the only one on the staff who constantly devotes a large portion of his time to the *Journal,* and I get the nasty letters when something goes wrong.

Now for a few words about our procedures:

Letters addressed to my attention are forwarded to me unopened. Letters addressed simply "Journal" or some variant of that are opened and examined to see who they should go to. I get all article submissions, suggestions, complaints, questions, and any subscriber problems Darlene feels I should handle.

Many times, whoever looks at a letter examines only the first sentence or two to determine who it should go to. Sometimes, people put several different requests on the same page. The letter must then make the rounds of all who are concerned, getting delayed (and possibly lost) at every stage along the way. Things will be expedited if you put each request on a separate sheet of paper (please put your name and address on each sheet).

When I get an article submission, I take a fast look at it (skim the first few lines, really) and then it goes on the bottom of the pile unless I reject it right away. If I reject it right away, and it does not have a stamped, self-addressed envelope with it, in most cases, I throw it away. This may seem heartless, but otherwise I would have to spend almost all my time addressing envelopes (each individual one doesn't take very much time, but it all adds up). I make exceptions to this rule for my regular contributors (you already know if you're one of these) or if I am in a good mood when I need to send you something.

Eventually, I will read the submission all the way through. I must then decide if it can be accepted as is, needs rewriting, or should be rejected. If accepted as is, it goes into a different pile. If it needs rewriting, I decide whether I want to do it, or if I should return it to the author. If rejected, back it goes with a rejection slip (or into file 13 if no SSAE). Articles get rejected because they are no good; because I have hundreds of their sort in stock; because they're poorly written, but the idea is not worth rewriting; because they are in bad taste; and for other reasons.

If you sent in an article, and have not heard anything about it, there are a number of possibilities. The article may never have reached me, due to the postal service or its being misdirected within the Workshop. (Sometimes *Journal* submissions are mistaken for other **Traveller**

continued on page 35

Traveller is available overseas through GDW distributors in the UK and Australia. We recommend that our subscribers in these countries obtain copies through their respective distributors.

United Kingdom: Traveller (and its additional booklets, adventures and supplements) is printed under license from GDW by Games Workshop, 27-29 Sunbeam R, Park Royal, London NW10. GW import the *Journal* and other GDW products.

Australia: Traveller products are imported and distributed by Jedko Games, 18 Fonceca St, Mordialloc, Vic.

JUST DETECTED

Conventions

Nancon 88-VI

July 29-31, Houston, Texas. RPGs, boardgames, miniatures, dealer area. Contact Nan's Game Headquarters, 118 Briar Grove Center/6100 Westheimer, Houston, TX 77057.

Dallcon 83

June 3-5, Dallas, Texas. SF&F RPGs, boardgames, miniatures, computer games, movies, seminars, demonstrations and more. Frank Chadwick, Dave Cook, Merle Rasmussen, Steve Perrin guests. Contact Dallcon 83, PO Box 59899, Dallas, TX 75229.

Games

Droids

The players are droids, in a grim post holocaust world where humans have been eliminated. Players design their own machines, adding to them as the game progresses, either from salvaged junk or parts taken from destroyed opponents.

One 80-page 8½" by 5" rules booklet.

Design: Neil Moore, Derek Stanovsky

Publisher: Integral Games, PO Box 13562, Arlington, TX 76013.

Star Trek (RPG)

FASA's SF role playing game set in the Star Trek universe. 15mm scale deck plans for Federation and Kilingon starships included.

One 8½" by 11", 128 page rules book, five 11" by 16" charts, fifteen 11" by 16" two-sided deck plans in a box. $25.00.

Design: Guy McLimore, Jr, Greg Poehlein, David F. Tepool.

Publisher: FASA Corporation, PO Box 6930, Chicago, IL 60680.

Magazines

Ares

Number 13 contains a review of *Fifth Frontier War.*

Single issues are $6. Subscriptions are $24 per year for 4 quarterly issues plus two semi-annual special editions.

Publisher: Dragon Publishing, PO Box 110, Lake Geneva, WI 53147.

Different Worlds

Number 28 contains *Planetary Encounters for Traveller.*

Single issues are $3. Subscriptions $22 for nine issues.

Publisher: Chaosium Inc, PO Box 6302, Albany, CA 94706.

The Space Gamer

Issue number 62 contains *Chainsaw Combat in Traveller.*

Single issues are $3. Write for current subscription information.

Publisher: Steve Jackson Games, PO Box 18957, Austin, TX 78760.

White Dwarf

Issue number 40 contains *Assignment: Survey, a new scoutship for* **Traveller.**

Single issues are 75p (US$3). Subscriptions are £10 in the UK, (US$45 airmail) for 12 issues. Other countries write for subscription information.

Publisher: Games Workshop, 27/29 Sunbeam Rd. London NW10, 6JP, UK.

TRAVELLER NEWS SERVICE

REGINA/REGINA (0310-A788899-A) **Date: 029-1109**

¶ Operation Iedshrpr several months in secret preparation, was launched today by elements of the Imperial Navy's Corridor fleet in a drive to break the siege of Efate and force back the Zhodani forces currently operating in Regina subsector.

¶ Commander Aia Resortin, fleet press officer, stated "Admiral Santanocheev has planned a brilliant campaign for the relief of Efate. Denial of Efate to the Zhodani means the denial of the whole subsector. This operation is the turning point of the war."

¶ Regretably, the briefing was cut short by a Zhodani hit-and-run raid, which partially damaged some buildings, but had no other effect. Ω

INTHE/REGINA (0810-B575776-9) **Date: 059-1109**

¶ A ship from Imperial Scout Suadron 497 (recently based at Jewell), arrived at Inthe today after successfully running the Zhodani blockade. Military security would not permit interviews with its crew, but a statement was later issued that Jewell has not fallen, and continues to defend against Zhodani attacks. Ω

KINORB/REGINA (0602-A663659-5) **Date: 083-1109**

¶ Operations against the Vargr force invading Yorbund and Heya achieved a considerable success recently. It was announced today that Battle Squadron 203 and several cruiser squadrons, under Vice-Admiral Elphinstone, were able to destroy a Vargr battle squadron after a prolonged engagement.

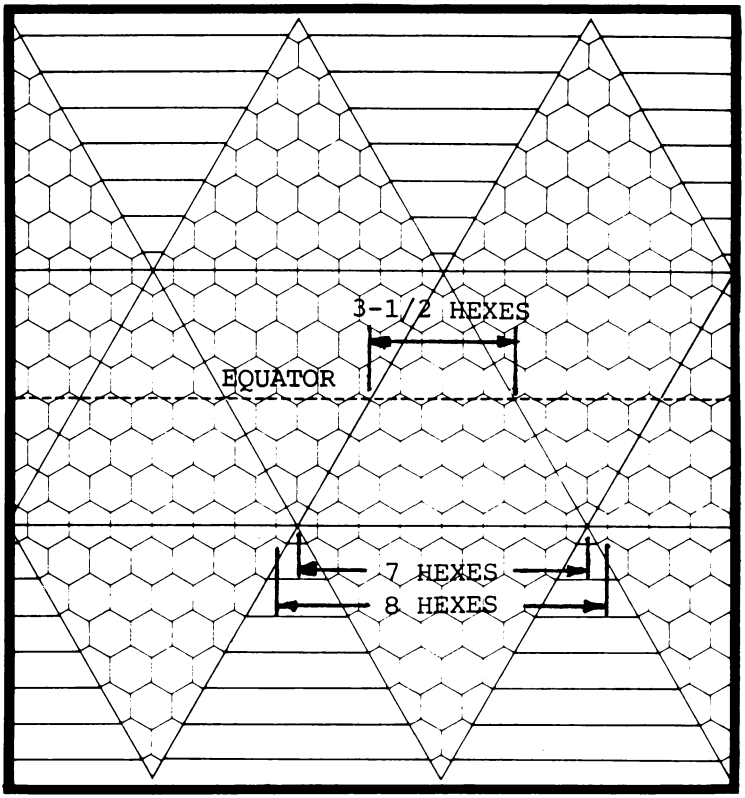
¶ Having regained orbital supremacy of the world, the Imperial 85th Infantry Field Army has moved in to secure the surface of Heya. Ω

LANTH/LANTH (0109-A879533-B) **Date: 096-1109**

¶ Only days after the Imperial 193rd fleet left Lanth for a reported assembly of Sword World forces at Tavonni the Sword Worlders appeared in the Lanth system and immediately began landing forces. Local resistance was fierce, but futile.

¶ The return of the Imperial fleet after failing to find the enemy in Tavinni, however, caught the Sword Worlders by surprise, and resulted in severe losses to the enemy. Imperial forces continue to mop up in the Lanth system. Ω

World Maps for Travellers



Of the "freebies" the Workshop prints on the *Journal* mailing covers, the one which always held the most interest to me was the world map grid. This article will suggest ways to make world maps even more useful, interesting, and impressive.

Refer to a map grid as you read this. The map is a flattened surface of a 3-D object mathematicians call a dodecahedron and gamers call a twenty-sided die. If you have such a die, it may be useful to look at it along with the map.

A PROPOSAL

The first suggestion concerns scale: what is a convenient scale, and how can we make all our planets conform to it? The geometry involved is fairly simple, so I will present my reasoning; if the numbers make your head hurt you may skip directly to the answer below. Look carefully at the map. You will notice that it consists of hexagons on the small scale and of triangles on the large scale. Each triangle has eight hexes along each side. The hexes in the corners of the triangle, however, are partially outside the triangle. Since the line only crosses one-half the width of these hexes, each side of a triangle is equal to the width of seven hexes. (Check it with a ruler if you don't trust me!) Now look at one of the triangles containing a section of the equator. We know from geometry that the line of the equator is one-half the length of a side of the triangle, that is to say, three and one-half hex-widths (see figure 1). Now there are ten triangles containing part of the equator, so the length of this planet's equator is 10 × 3.5, or 35 hexes. This gives away the planet's

diameter, since the length of the equator is pi times the diameter, or 35/pi=11.14.

Where does all this leave us? Let's pick a convenient number, say 1000 kilometers, for our hex width. That makes our equator 35000 km and our diameter about 11,140 km, or about 6920 miles. This is a **Traveller** world size of 7, within 1.2% of exact. Now recall the length of the sides of the triangles on the map — also 7. I propose that the same relation be applied to other world sizes, that is, world size equals triangle size (measured in different units, of course).

Now, let me defend my position before you see the sleight of hand. How can we calculate the diameter of a dodecahedron with nary a curved surface? The truth is that our map is only an approximation of a spherical surface, and must contain a certain amount of distortion. In fact, any flat map of a globe must contain distortions of distance or direction, and usually contains both. This applies as much to the finest surveyor's map as to our game maps. The fact that the map is flat while the sphere is curved is the first distortion. All maps allow a little distortion in the name of convenience, much as our games allow simplification in the name of playability. Have you ever noticed how many world maps grossly stretch Scandinavia in order to keep its position relative to the rest of Europe? The important thing for our map is convenience within the bounds of reasonable accuracy.

MAKING A MAP

Now consider worlds of other sizes. How can we map them on the same scale? You will find it easy with a ruler, a pencil, and a sheet of blank hex paper. First, look carefully at our size 7 world map. Notice that it consists of twenty triangles joined together (the two triangles on the east and west edges simply split in half). Second, notice that the sides on each triangle follow the hex row on the grid. All we want to change is the number of hexes along the sides of the triangles. Try laying out a single triangle before you tackle the whole map. Turn the hex paper until rows run horizontally. Start a line in the center of a hexagon and trace it across a number of hexsides equal to the world size (for a size 7 world, the line crosses 7 hexsides - look at the existing map).

This line also ends at the center of a hexagon. Now start new lines at each end of the first line. These lines also follow hex rows, but angle back at sixty degrees so that they meet each other at their end points. The same process is followed for each of the twenty triangles. Be careful to join the triangles in the same positions shown on the existing map. It may help to start at the upper left corner of both the map and the hex paper to keep from running off the edge. The equator may be drawn in last. Mark the center of the sides of the equatorial triangles, and trace a line through these marks. Note that the equator will follow a hex row on even world sizes, but fall between hex rows on odd sizes (see map).

This procedure will work for any **Traveller** world size or larger, with the exception of size 0 (asteroid/planetoid). The referee will need to devise a system for representing such small worlds. If a constant hex size is used, all larger worlds will be mapped to the same scale with this system. For larger or more detailed maps, allow each hexagon on these maps to contain several hexagons of a smaller scale. Before you draw your world maps, however, make a trip to the local quick-print or photocopying shop and have copies made. If it is possible, get them printed on stiff paper (editor's note: this is called *index;* take a *Journal* mailing cover as a sample), which will prove valuable in the next step.

TERRA-FORMING IN YOUR KITCHEN

The final step in the process will be to make our maps impressive. This is optional, but if you have scissors, tape, and a moderate amount of coordination, you can make three dimensional worlds from your maps. This works best with heavy paper. First, cut out the map along the outside edges. Second, carefully fold backwards along each side of each triangle (folding over a straight-edge will help form a sharp crease). Do not fold along the equator line. Now join the east and west edges of the split triangles, and tape the seam. It may help to refer again to the twenty-sided die if you have one. Fold back the polar triangles so that the edges join and the points meet, again taping the seams. The hardest part is making the final seam, but when you make it you are finished. Now you can have 3-D scale maps of the worlds your players visit!

The worst problem with these "globes" is the tape on the seams. It tends to look bad and is hard to mark on. If you are clever and plan ahead, it should be possible to leave tabs on the seams for gluing. Another suggestion is to save your map in its original flat form and fold up a copy for display to the players. Complete the map before folding so you will not have to mark on top of the tape.

While you may wish to leave some of your secrets unmarked on the display map, remember that certain features (cities, major roads, etc.) become easily spotted from increasingly remote distances as technology develops.

The best use for folded maps is to display them to player characters in orbit. This allows players to make sensible decisions for a point of landing. The maps may be displayed at a distance, say twenty feet, when players first see the planet through a telescope.

For players in orbit, or for planets cataloged in the ship's library, allow players to examine the 3-D map closely.

Other uses may be found. A 3-D map makes it easier to determine the shortest route between two points on a spherical surface; the polar route may be shorter than an east-west route, for instance. A clever referee will see that a map patterned after a die may be thrown to determine the location of essentially random occurances - say, a forced landing, a meteor shower, a plague, or the current location of a person or thing. Your imagination is the limit.

POINTS OF INTEREST

One final point, if you will excuse the pun. The hexes at the corners of the folded map have now become pentagons. This space warp is what allows the grid to fold up, and should be ignored for purposes of play. Notice that a size 1 world consists of nothing but pentagons, and is therefore an icosahedron (a twelve-sided die) with a point raised on each face. That, however, has no major effect on play, its just a little difficult to fold unless you have very thin fingers.

— Bobby Bryant

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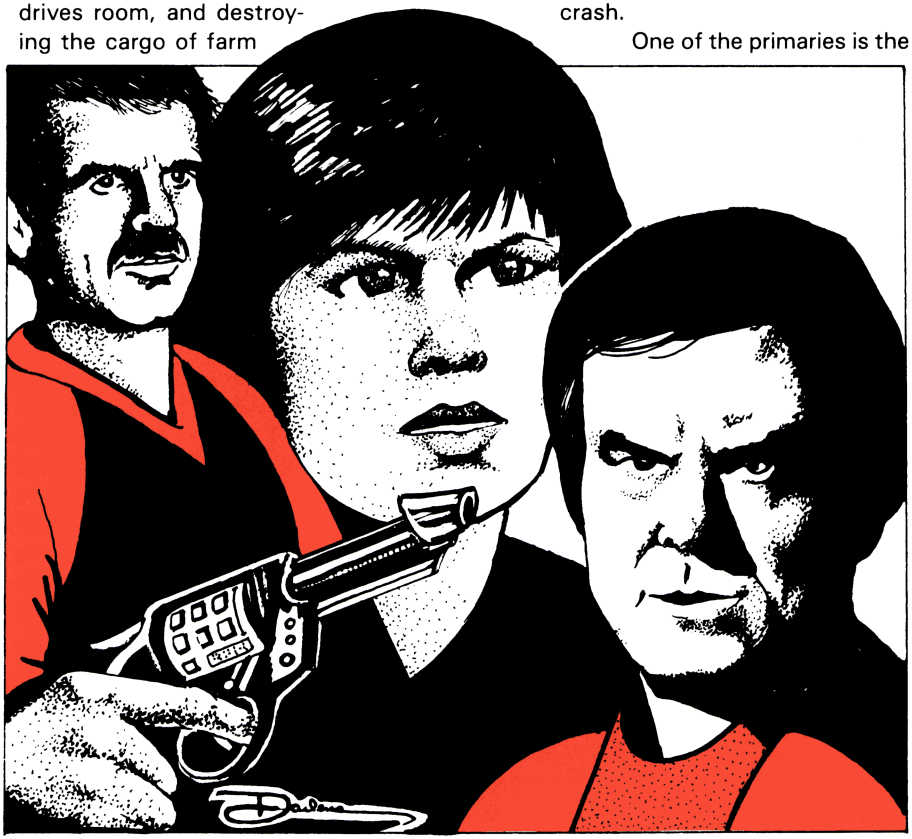
LAST FLIGHT *of the Themis*

Amber Zone

Players' Information:

During a low-level night approach to Gwydion starport, the Highline Corporation free trader Themis (200 tons, see plans in supplement 7, *Traders and Gunboats*) crashed, killing all aboard except for one crewmember on duty in the drives room, and destroying the cargo of farm implements. Despite the unusual circumstances of the approach — so low as to be off Gwydion's approach radar, an illegal maneuver — the official inquiry reached a verdict of "blame not provable." The players are approached by representatives of a group of relatives of those killed in the Themis disaster. The group wishes to hire the players as guards, crew, or investigative help in a private inquiry into the causes of the crash.

One of the primaries is the



dead pilot's sister. She believes that the verdict of the inquest was reached hastily and cast doubts on her brother's reputation, which she wishes to clear. Another representative is the widower of a passenger; the third is a dead crewmember's cousin. Both of these are simply after the truth. The relative's organization has available a starship of the Themis's class and apparently unlimited credit. They will pay normal salaries for the duration of the operation, plus all reasonable expenses. Double salaries will be paid if sufficient evidence is gathered to open a new official inquiry.

Referee's Information:

The facts in the crash of the Highline Themis are as follows:

The pilot was flying a dangerous approach because he was smuggling a small but highly valuable package. He planned to touch down and pass the parcel on before Gwydion control was quite aware that he had landed, claiming instrument failure for his violation of procedures.

However, during the tight and rapid maneuvers required (the flight path was strewn with boulders, some nearly twenty meters high) a worn bushing in the pilot's seat support (the result of poor maintenance) scraped a wire. The short caused a tiny electrical fire inside the seat. By itself, this fire would have been harmless, however, when exposed to heat the upholstery material (Novyde synthetic leather) generated a colorless, toxic vapor. The gas made the pilot briefly dizzy — and before anyone on the bridge had time to notice, Themis was on the rocks.

The official inquest was in fact rushed. It is obvious to any pilot with experience in the "small package trade" (which is most of them) that Themis' pilot was indeed smuggling; the inconclusive, hasty verdict was brought to protect his reputation, not damage it.

The facts concerning the relatives are:

The organization is genuine. Its money comes from a few well-off members and from insurance payments. Credit is not unlimited, though the limits are fairly high; roughly Cr100,000 per single purchase. The ship is on loan from the Highline Corporation, and must be returned.

The three primaries all have secrets, however.

The pilot's sister is trying to recover the smuggled parcel. She will attempt to contact the sole crash survivor, who is now working at Gwydion starport. The survivor may or may not (at ref's option) know about the parcel; if so, the ex-crewmember will talk only to the sister, and only alone.

The sister was at one time an apprentice navigator, and is knowledgable about starships, and about smuggling and smugglers. She would in fact like to clear her brother's name, but it is definitely secondary to recovering the package.

The "cousin" is actually unrelated to any of the accident victims; he is a freelance industrial spy employed by Customform, LIC, the maker of the dangerous upholstery material. Only a small, faultily synthesized batch of Novyde is hazardous, and no other accidents have been reported; the company cannot know with certainty that it was responsible in this case, but their spy is to find out and, if so, cover up the fact. The spy hates violence, and in fact is rather cowardly, though he can handle guns; he will prefer tactics such as hiring thugs to scare off or rough up team members (he has Cr20,000 cash available for this, bribes, and so on). He will not kill or order killing unless his own life is in danger, and even then will try bribery first.

The widower's late wife was in the

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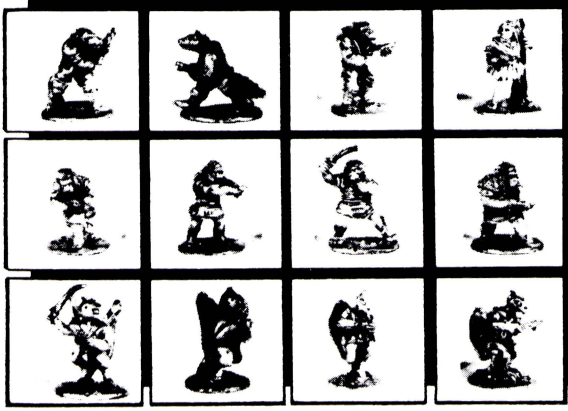

Set 5: Aliens Part

Set 1: Adventurers
Set 2: The Military
Set 3: Ship's Crew
Set 4: Citizens
Set 5: Aliens
Striker Set 1:
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Striker Set 2:
Mid Tech Infantry Unit
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bridge-deck stateroom. The man is a top security officer for Highline Corporation, who pulled strings to get himself assigned to this job (which is supposed to be covering up for the spaceline, which knows its maintenance is substandard).

This man has been in military intelligence and private security for over thirty years, and has a powerful sense of duty overriding his grief. However: if he comes to believe, correctly or not, that any identifiable person or persons caused his wife's death, he will kill them without compunction. He is an expert with all small arms and in unarmed combat, as well as the usual security/intelligence skills.

This situation is obviously highly complicated and can move in many different directions. There are potentials for blackmail, loot, hijacking, etc. Other members of the relative's group may be added, to provide skills the players lack and act as red herrings. The wreck of Themis may be virtually as it was after the crash, or picked clean by salvagers.

(During the test of this scenario, the players used their ship to duplicate the last flight of the Themis, as in Ernest K. Gann's *Fate is the Hunter.)*

Other possibilities include local criminal gangs after the parcel, and members of the board of inquiry covering for themselves.

Avoid the temptation to have the widower go berserk; keep him under control. If he does slip towards madness, he should become careless in proportion.

Actually acquiring enough evidence to reopen the inquest is not likely to please anyone without secret motives — and perhaps even them, since a "lost while smuggling" verdict might cost them their insurance rewards. However, a new inquest would be a victory for those rare causes, truth and justice, and should be rewarded somehow, by somebody.

— ©1983, John M. Ford

Contact: The Githiaskio

The Githiaskio are a race of intelligent aquatic sophonts (also known as Squids or Whooiihee in imitation of their whistling speech); they originated on a planet on the coreward edge of the Imperium. Physically, they are radically different from the human norm; phychologically, they are remarkably similar.

BIOLOGY

The Githiaskio are bisexual, semi-homeothermic, and give birth to single, live young. They average 2 to 2.5 meters in length, about half of which is tentacle, and are about 50 cm in diameter at their thickest point. They have roughly cylindrical bodies, which taper into a muscular swimming "fluke" at one end and divide into six tentacles around a feeding orifice at the other. A cluster of sensory organs is mounted mid-way along the body. Githiaskio eyes focus poorly; their prime sense is sound. They are very sensitive to light and to water-borne chemicals.

Githiaskio speech has been described as "whistling underwater". It is quite complex, relying heavily on pitch intonation. Githiaskio and humans can learn to understand each other's speech, but neither can speak the other's language except on a very primitive basis (things are complicated by the fact that one language is spoken underwater, the other in air, requiring microphones and speakers suitable for both environments.

Githiaskio require oxygen for their respiration, most worlds with a thin or better atmospheres are acceptable to them. They can tolerate a fairly high salinity, but certain chemicals make conditions intolerable for them. The presence of an atmospheric taint often means problems (roll 3+ for toleration; DM −6 if atmosphere is tainted).

The race can tolerate depths of up to 700 meters at 1G, although sudden drops in pressure create problems similar to nitrogen narcosis (the "bends") in humans. Higher pressures force the use of cumbersome protection. The bodies of these creatures have just-lighter-than-neutral buoyancy; they can swim at 15 kph for long periods, or twice that in short bursts.

Githiaskio exposed to air suffer

physical irritation, developing into pain, and finally death through dehydration and suffocation. The process takes only a few minutes. Even if an enveloping "wet suit" is available, a Githiaskio removed from the support of water can suffer severe internal injuries unless provided with a complex supportive sling; only zero-G conditions remove this requirement.

HISTORY

Githiaski/Dartho (0806 A-789886-C) is a mineral-poor world on the fringe of the Lesser Rift; the First Imperium seems to have paid little attention to the world, for the intelligent inhabitants were only recently discovered by a merchant ship during the Long Night. Their name for their planet can best be represented as *Llaaaiihoin* (with a heavy vibrato on the first syllable, and a high pitch on the last).

As the world has few, small continents mostly consisting of salt marshes and swamps, regular contact with the Githiaskio came only with the rise of the Third Imperium. As scientific study focussed on the race, their curious evolutionary history came to light.

Githiaski's seas teem with life, but forms analogous to vertebrates have never appeared; rather the dominant phylum has developed a supportive inner "cage" of gristle-like material. The Githiaskio's ancestors may have resembled those Terran marine worms which bury themselves in the seabed, leaving only a bundle of tentacles exposed; their closer relatives were certainly squid-like in external form.

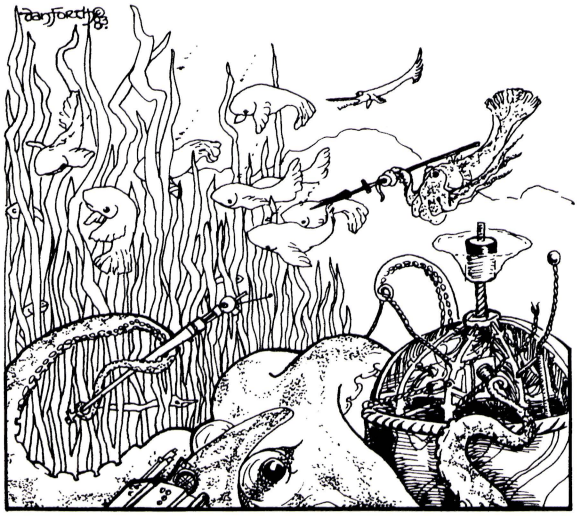
The Githiaskio evolved from a race of omnivore scavenger-gatherers, inhabiting shallow seas with a fairly profuse growth of marine vegetation; intelligence seems to have appeared when a period of heavy volcanic activity produced repeated shifts in marine currents and serious water pollution. The small family groups of Githiaskio were forced to closer cooperation and wider searches for food; intelligence became a key survival feature. The parallel here with human history is certainly interesting, particularly as this ancestry has produced creatures so intellectually similar to humaniti that human psychoanalysis will work on Githiaskio.

When contacted, the Githiaskio had developed a sophisticated culture, but had not developed a high-technology civilization because of their lack of metals, which are effectively impossible to refine or work underwater. Their skill in stonework and the use of vegetable fibers was considerable; however, and is still admired. Since the Imperium expanded into their region of space, these beings have become valued (if independently-minded) citizens, trading their services as water-dwellers for high-technology items that have enabled them to develop a very advanced society remarkably quickly.

SOCIETY

When first contacted, the Githiaskio had developed several distinct, complex cultures at around tech level 1—2 but lacking metals except for an occasional nearly pure lump which could be worked into something useful or decorative. Various aquatic animals had been domesticated, and sailing vessels had been developed with submerged hulls and exposed rigging. The major cultures still display distinct identities, but dealings with the Imperium have encouraged the development of a coordinating bureaucratic organization with some power over the various nations. Nonetheless, Githiaskio societies are no more fit subjects for generalization than are their human equivalents.

Aware that they need imported technology to build and to maintain an advanced society, the Githiaskio have



produced organizations dedicated to earning interstellar currency. Thus, the world has a small but well-advertised tourist industry, and Githiaskio are frequently found working off-planet in underwater jobs of all kinds, in zero-G work (at which their aquatic background makes them particularly adept), and in academic posts.

REFEREEING GITHIASKIO

Githiaskio with "civilian" backgrounds tend to have been trained on their homeworld; hence medical skills (for example) will be Githiaskio oriented, while "blade" skills will almost invariably be taken in spear (this weapon still being the standard arm of "backwoods" Githiaskio). Those with military or mercantile training will possess less "parochial" knowledge, but will nonetheless have slightly unusual career histories. Interstellar organizations have many uses for aquatic beings, but obviously have to make special arrangements; the army and marines tend to form "submarine specialist" units, which are attached at corps or army level as needed. The scouts and merchants tend to assign Githiaskio to special exploratory ships or to base duty on water worlds. Referees should use the standard character generation systems, but should avoid situations in which Githiaskio serve in circumstances or organizations that cannot or will not provide the facilities they require.

In zero-G conditions, simulate the superior performance of Githiaskio by giving them DM+3 on all rolls to keep or regain control.

Note that two tentacles are sufficient to maintain a handhold, leaving four free for other uses.

The Githiaskio have adopted the Imperial attitude toward psionics, so little is known of their innate abilities in such matters.

Since their minds are so similar to human in other respects, it is felt they have a comparable level of psionic ability.

Equipment: Githiaskio work best with specially constructed tools and weapons, but can use human devices quite effectively (no penalties are imposed for such use, but no bonuses for advantageous dexterity can be claimed). Special construction adds little to costs, but such work becomes harder to find the farther away from Githiaski you are.

Sealed environments (spaceships, ATVs, etc.) can be fitted with waterproof equipment, purifiers, and so on, at a cost of about Cr2,000 per ton of living space converted. Special armor (other than battle dress) and vacc suits can be produced at 50% over cost. However, simple sealed suits do not provide enough support for Githiaskio to operate out of liquid under gravity. A few powered "support suits" have been produced, but these are uncomfortable to the wearer and very expensive

continued on page 27

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SuSAG

Although no two megacorporations are exactly alike, there are enough similarities between them to allow a study of one to serve as a study of all. The following general survey of the history, organization and activities of SuSAG will serve to illustrate how megacorporations operate and delineate their powers and limitations.

HISTORY

Schunamann und Sohn, AG, LIC was founded in 252 by Gustav Schunamann, a professor of biochemical engineering and his son Reinhardt, a doctor of medicine.

A few years earlier, the elder Schunamann had resigned his position at the Imperial University to pursue private research. The result of this research was the discovery of a radically new technique for the isolation of various forms of the psionic drug, psioniline. Schunamann patented the process and licensed it to several manufacturing concerns. By 252, using the royalties which had accumulated, the Schunamanns purchased a near bankrupt pharmaceuticals company which carried an old Sylean charter (and was thus entitled to a limited Imperial charter automatically) and renamed it Schunamann und Sohn AG, LIC (retaining the archaic AG). Shortly afterward, Schunamann announced a new, more efficient process (which he had evidently discovered years before) and the new company, (commonly known as SuSAG) rapidly drove almost all competing drugs off the market.

The company's early years were stormy ones. The Imperial University brought suit against SuSAG, charging that Schunamann had developed his processes while at the university, and thus they belonged to the government. Other firms brought numerous other lawsuits. SuSAG defended itself successfully from all these attacks, but they instilled in SuSAG and the Schunamann family a

corporate paranoia which was to heavily color the firm's actions for the first two centuries of its existence. This paranoia, although it has lessened over the centuries, can still be detected in some of SuSAG's actions to this day.

Perhaps because he was a researcher at heart, Gustav established a policy of devoting large sums to exploratory research, and SuSAG's well-equipped laboratories rapidly attracted some of the best minds in the Imperium, another characteristic of SuSAG which persists to this day. Gustav's heavy emphasis on research brought the company numerous new products and manufacturing processes, which laid a strong foundation for the company's future growth. The discoveries were not always in the field of pharmaceuticals, however, and the company began to diversify into medical products in general, and later into related areas such as chemistry and geneering (genetic engineering). The deep-set paranoia of the early years prevented SuSAG from selling or licensing any of its discoveries to other companies. Many good ideas languished in the company files for years, because SuSAG did not have the resources to develop them, but did not want any other company to benefit from them.

SuSAG's dominance of the psi drug market caused it to be hardest hit by the psionics suppressions of 800 to 826. The manufacture and sale of all psionic drugs was declared illegal, all manufacturing plants within the Imperium closed down, and all stockpiles confiscated. Although SuSAG had considerably diversified its activities by this time, the suppressions nearly destroyed the company. The massive loss of revenue forced a number of emergency measures on the company, including sizable loans from other megacorporations. As part of the arrangements, large blocks of SuSAG stock were transferred to the other firms. Up until that time, the Schunamann family had retained over 75% of SuSAG stock, and the forced transfer caused considerable loss of revenue to the family. Eventually, some of this stock was reclaimed, but significant amounts are still retained by others, most notably Hortalez et Cie (9%), GSbAG (5%), and Sternmetal Horizons LIC. (3%), The resulting change in the composition of the board of directors was ultimately beneficial for SuSAG, since it diluted the paranoid tendencies of the Schunamann family, which had dominated the board up to that time.

Although it took decades to recover from the damage done by the loss of the Psionic Suppressions, SuSAG resumed a slow, steady growth, gradually expanding into new markets, such as synthetics, industrial chemicals, and (most controversially) chemical and biological warfare agents for the Imperial military. SuSAG is responsible for a number of major advances in anagathic research, and is one of the largest suppliers of anagathic drugs in the Imperium. In addition, through a number of factories located outside the Imperium (owned by a chain of subsidiary companies), SuSAG has continued the manufacture of psionic drugs, some of which illicitly find their way back into the Imperium, where they bring premium prices because of their quality and purity. SuSAG does not engage in smuggling of these drugs into the Imperium.

Throughout its development, SuSAG made it a policy to purchase control of numerous subsidiary companies. Often it was cheaper for SuSAG to acquire an existing company in order to move operations into a new region of space or to move into a new field. Often SuSAG would buy a company to engage in operations to which SuSAG did not wish to have its name associated. The firms outside the Imperium which manufac-

ture psionic drugs are owned through a long and complex chain of holding companies, dummy corporations, and interlocking directorates.

To catalog the activities of SuSAG and all it subsidiary companies would take more space than is available here. Basically, it can be said that if it's done, SuSAG owns at least one company that does it.

Major subsidiary companies are under the control of the board of directors, lesser companies are under the control of the divisional vice-presidents or the regional general managers.

ORGANIZATION

SuSAG is organized in a similar fashion to most other limited Imperial corporations, that is, there is a board of directors, a president, and numerous vice-presidents. One vice-president is responsible for the control of one of the seven divisions of the company: the pharmaceuticals division, the medical and surgical products division, the industrial chemicals division, the geneering division, the CBW (chemical and bacteriological warfare) division, the research division, and the extra-Imperial division.

Each divisional vice-president has a number of executive assistants which are not directly in the chain of command. These assist in the administration and operation of the division, but do not set policy.

Under the divisional vice-presidents are the division's numerous regional general managers. The most important operating officers of SuSAG, these RGMs and their assistants control the operations of a SuSAG division inside a particular region of space. A region may range in size from a few systems in the heavily populated regions of the Imperium around Core sector, to several subsectors in more sparsely populated regions. Note that the boundaries of a region belonging to one division often do not completely coincide with those of another.

In frontier regions, one person may occupy the position of RGM for several divisions. In more densely populated areas, there are several RGMs, who may consult with one another, but only have authority over their own division's activities. This system could lead to interdivisional rivalry, but seldom does, since each SuSAG division rarely competes directly with another. Many times, however, subsidiary companies will be working at cross-purposes, sometimes actually engaging in trade wars with other SuSAG subsidiaries. Naturally, these are ended as soon as they are

discovered, but with an entity as large as SuSAG, it is difficult to keep track of who is and who is not on your side.

Advertising: An overall advertising policy is set by the board of directors. Individual divisions each have an advertising executive, responsible for overseeing the advertising for that division. Subsidiary companies coordinate their advertising efforts with those of SuSAG.

Security: Many megacorporations contract out all but the most important security measures to independent security companies. SuSAG maintains an unusually large and well-equipped corporate security forces which handle all aspects of their security requirements. There are many reasons behind this. Many of SuSAG's products are compact, extremely valuable, and easily resold on the black market. Because of the value of their manufacturing processes, SuSAG manufacturing plants and research installations are often the target of industrial espionage by rival firms. SuSAG's CBW installations are often the subject of raids by terrorists seeking to steal CBW weaponry or sabotage by anti-CBW activists. The company's undeservedly poor reputation for safety, particularly in its CBW plants, causes a great deal of vandalism at all SuSAG installations.

These factors, combined with the company's extreme distrust of any outside agency, explain SuSAG's extensive security establishment.

Most security forces are under the direct control of the various RGMs, and operate only in the region to which they are assigned. The board of directors, however, maintains several units of wide-ranging "trouble-shooters," who are assigned to particular sensitive areas of very important installations.

Mercenaries: In spite of its desire to keep everything in house, SuSAG often hires mercenary units for actions with which it does not wish its name (or that of a subsidiary) associated. By company policy, mercenaries can only be hired on the authority of the RGM, but this is usually done through several intermediaries (usually SuSAG security personnel).

THE DIVISIONS

The operations of SuSAG's various divisions are outlined below.

Pharmaceuticals Division: This division manufactures and markets medical drugs for treatment and prevention of various pathological conditions, therapeutic drugs such as anagathics, veterinary and horticultural drugs, surgical drugs such as anesthetics and muscle-relaxants.

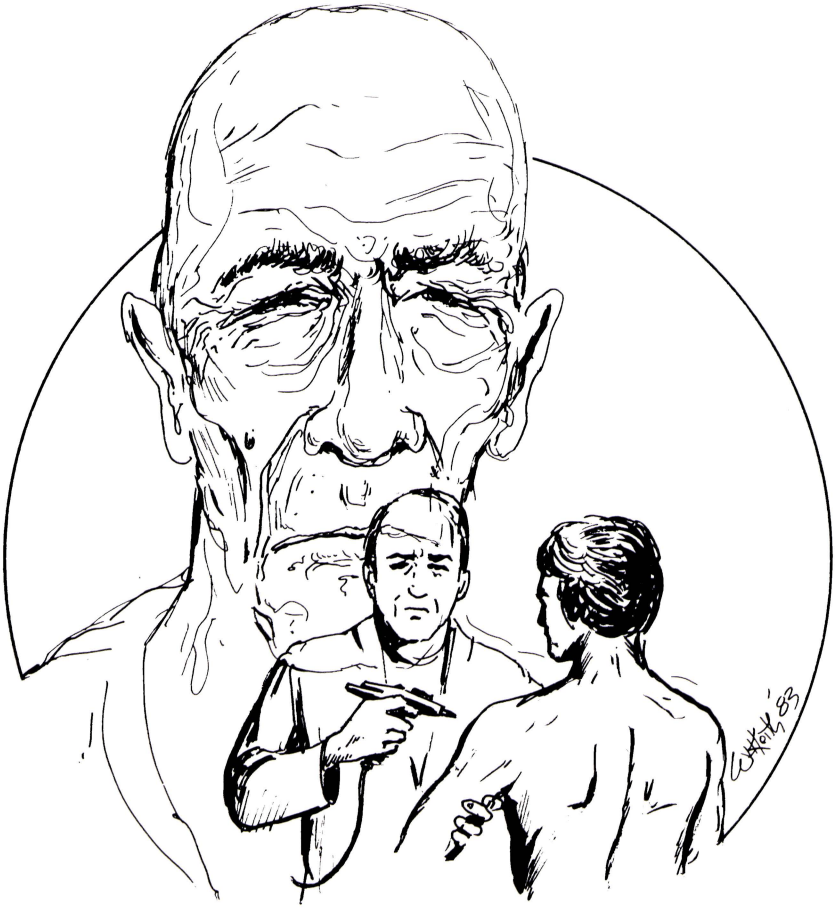
Medical and Surgical Products Division: This division manufactures and markets non-pharmaceutical medical and surgical products such as diagnostic equipment, surgical instruments and supplies, and prosthetic devices such as replacement limbs.

Industrial Chemicals Division: This division manufactures chemicals used by other companies in manufacturing processes. Several subsidiary companies provide chemicals of extreme purity for scientific applications.

Geneering Division: This division manufactures geneered organisms for specific industrial and agricultural applications.

CBW Division: This division manufactures chemical and bacteriological weapons and defenses exclusively for the Imperial military and its allies. Despite the fact that all such plants are located on isolated, uninhabitable worlds, this division has a very poor reputation for safety.

Research Division: This division is not engaged in manufacturing, but conducts a constant search for new products and new ways of making old products.



Extra-Imperial Division: This division is in charge of all SuSAG activities outside the Imperium, which includes those of all SuSAG subsidiary companies. Many of these activities would be illegal if carried out inside the Imperium, such as the manufacture of psionic drugs.

Because of the lack of reliable protection for its installations and products, SuSAG security teams assigned to extra-Imperial duties are as heavily equipped as most planetary military forces. They are often assigned company starships for the protection of extremely valuable facilities (such as the psi drug factories).

POLICIES AND GOALS

SuSAG's main goals are to make money, retain its position of power relative to other megacorporations, retain its control of its current markets, develop new markets for old products, and develop and market new products (nothing really surprising).

SuSAG has a great desire to improve its poor public image, and spends billions of credits annually on advertising with this in mind.

SuSAG facilities engaged in the manufacture of extremely valuable or dangerous products (such as its pharmaceutical, psi and CBW plants) are located in remote and sparsely populated areas whenever possible. This was done to minimize potential deaths in the case of an accident, and to facilitate protection of the plants and their products. Psi drug plants are especially vulnerable

because of the high value of their product on the black market, and receive especially high levels of protection by corporate security. CBW plants are usually assigned units of the Imperial military for protection, but company security at these plants is also heavy.

CORPORATE/GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

The Imperium: The Imperium has the power to tax megacorporations and regulate certain of their actions. SuSAG's power, in certain areas, is probably equal to the Imperium's. Active hostilities, however, would be bad for business.

SuSAG maintains that a stable interstellar government is good for business, and that keeping the Imperium in power is in their own best interests. For this reason, SuSAG never actively opposes the Imperium, or works for its downfall. This does not mean that no SuSAG division ever violates the law, merely that they keep violations to a minimum, and try not to get caught.

Outside the Imperium, SuSAG still exercises restraint in opposing Imperial interests.

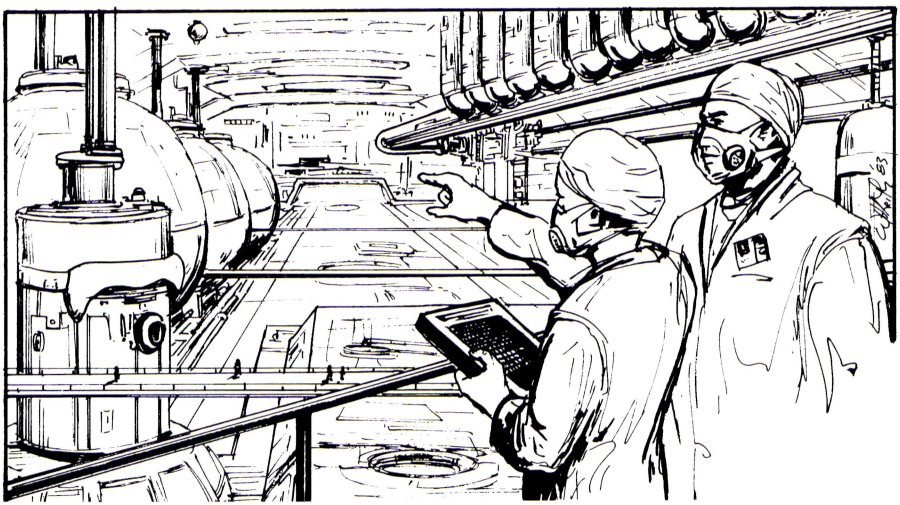
Local Governments: By Imperial law, SuSAG is required to comply with whatever local laws are in effect. As a general rule, SuSAG prefers not to overtly oppose a legitimate planetary government. Usually, the firm has sufficient covert influence to persuade a government to exempt it from most restrictions.

Unlike most other megacorporations, few worlds are under SuSAG's direct control. This is due to a company policy, promulgated to help SuSAG'S public image. Corporate control of a world is usually resented by the populace, and in SuSAG's case, this could lead to outright rebellion. However, SuSAG retains covert political and economic control of a number of worlds throughout the Imperium and beyond, through subsidiaries.

SUSAG IN THE SPINWARD MARCHES

SuSAG's presence in the Spinward Marches sector dates from the acquisition of a chemical facility on Mora in 427. Expansion proceeded rapidly, and all divisions were active in the Marches by 600. Massive stockpiles of CBW weaponry and countermeasures were sold to the Imperium at the start of the Third Frontier War (none were used), and at the war's end a CBW plant was established on Shirene (Lunion 0505).

SuSAG has other major facilities in the



Rhylanor (Rhylanor 0306), Fornice (Mora 0605), and Trin (Trin's Veil 0805) systems. SuSAG subbsidiaries have facilities at most non-Zhodani systems.

Each SuSAG division maintains offices at A and B starports in the Marches. SuSAG maintains no offices and owns no subsidiaries in territories under Zhodani control, but some trade was done before the recent war.

The extra-Imperial division maintains a large psi drug manufacturing facility at Tarsus (District 268 0308), as well as other (non-psi drug) facilities in the Zamine (Darrian 0401), and Collace (District 268 0407) systems.

District 268 is considered an important enough region to rate an RGM all its own.

SUSAG IN THE SOLOMANI RIM

SuSAG has an extensive presence in the Rim, dating from the acquisition of Inidu (Concord 0806) from its original owners in 425, just before the admission of the Easter Concord into the Imperium. All divisions of SuSAG are active in the Rim, and its offices can be found at all A and B starports In Imperial space.

Inidu is owned by SuSAG's R&D division, and the populace is employed by SuSAG.

The Extra Imperial division, through subsidiary companies, has installations on dozens of worlds within the Solomani Confederation. SuSAG's affiliation with these companies is kept hidden from the public at large, because of the bad feeling that would be generated by an Imperial firm controlling Solomani companies.

Manufacture of psi drugs is illegal in the Solomani Confederation, and SuSAG runs no psi drug plants there (although, as with the Imperium, smuggled SuSAG psi drugs are sold on the black market).

CONCLUSION

It is hoped that this brief look at SuSAG will help referees to run player interactions with all megacorporations. For an example of a SuSAG-backed operation, see Adventure 9, *Nomads of the World Ocean.*

— Loren K. Wiseman

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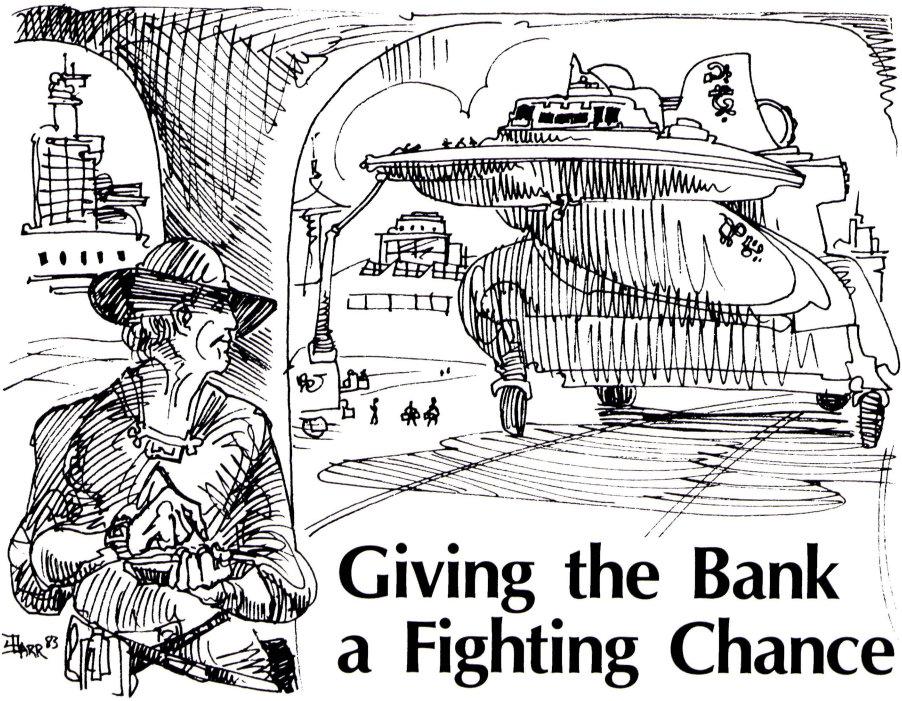

Giving the Bank a Fighting Chance

Sergeant Cutter and his band have just arrived at Regina. After their latest venture, they have enough money pooled together to make the down payment on that ship they've been dreaming of.

The bank is contacted and the construction begins. Months later an excited crew boards its new home and shuttles out of orbit. They spend several months trading along the established routes, making sure the payments are promptly made each month. Then, when cutter is certain the bank's suspicions are allayed, he gives the order to skip. The plan is to leave Regina subsector far behind, along with the bank and its cumbersome payments.

The Bank of Regina gets burned again, or does it? Obviously, a bank which finances the construction of ships costing into the billions of credits has methods of preventing (or at least discouraging) such acts and of bringing the perpetrators to justice. Banks finance ships knowing the risks involved, and they do everything possible to push the odds over into their favor.

The following is a method of dealing with skipping as it is handled in my campaign, as well as a possible new source of income and adventure for players.

THE BANK

Whether your campaign has an independent bank on each world, a subsector or sector wide organization with branch banks on each world, or a master bank with a central headquarters and numerous branches, it is not illogical to assume that banks will cooperate to reduce losses. This will most likely take the form of an information sharing network among all banks in a given empire or at least within a sector. Banks would need information on a client's credit rating to efficiently screen bad risks. Such a system can be assumed to be in effect within the Imperium, and within the other interstellar empires of the **Traveller** universe. There is a very good

possibility that information is shared between empires, under normal conditions.

Given this system, characters who make a bad record for themselves in one region will find their record following them throughout their travels. The ways of getting around this (forged ID documents, shell companies, assumed names, etc.) are all imperfect, and involve some degree of risk. Buying a ship and getting around the system can be a major challenge to a group of adventurers, and can provide months of pleasurable gaming sessions.

PREVENTATIVE MEASURES

Banks take very direct steps to prevent clients from skipping out before their loan is repaid. The simplest way, and in the long run, the cheapest, is to screen out unfavorable clients beforehand. Before the loan is finalized, a credit check and background review will be conducted. If these reveal no problems, and the client shows an ability to repay the loan it will be approved. These checks will vary from exhaustive research for new clients to rather token searches for well-established clients or large property owners with deep roots in the region concerned.

Credit: Banks will know of bad credit characters have established with other banks, unless that information could not reasonably have reached the bank at that time or the players have taken measures (such as false names, bribes, etc.) to prevent it. In general, banks send out information on skippers or delinquent payments as soon as such status is realized. Inside the Imperium, information reaches other banks in rough correlation with the x-boat system.

Collateral: A bank will often demand that a client put up property to act as security for a loan. Though it is rarely enough to cover the price of a ship, it has been found to have some deterrent effect.

Background Review: Banks will study the client's travelling and business habits. Specifically, they will look for criminal records, a tendency to fail in business ventures, and any involvement with organizations which the bank considers questionable. If there is any doubt about the character's background, it is very likely that the loan will be denied.

Intended use: Banks place a great deal of weight on the use to which the ship will be put. Possible use of a ship in a risky venture will be cause for the bank to deny the loan, but stable ventures with low profit margins will not look very promising either.

Most banks are reluctant to completely trust some clients with the several million credits involved in building a ship, even though no flaws in the client's background can be discovered. In cases like these, some banks have been known to take additional measures to secure the bank's investment. A timer may be built into a ship's computer so that the computer will cease functioning if it is not reset by a bank official each month after the payment is tendered. The timer, of course, is removed when the payments are completed. Most banks, however, find it simpler to deny the loan application in the first place.

REPOS

Despite all the measures bank's take to deter skipping, a clever group will occasionally slip past the safeguards, or an honest group will succumb to temptation. This is where the repos come in.

Repos are people who pursue and retrieve ships and crews who have skipped. The term is descended from the word "repossession". Occasionally, a repo will be hired to retrieve other stolen property.

There are basically two types of repos, those who work for a bank or other

financial institution and the independents (who work for themselves).

Company repos receive a salary (generally Cr50,000 per year) plus a bonus of 2% of the value of the recovered ship. Their employer pays their expenses. They have access to their firm's information network, and can usually count on the cooperation of local financial institutions and police.

Independents have no financial backing, and generally charge expenses plus 2-5% of the value of the recovered vessel. If some or all of the crew are wanted for other crimes, the repo can collect all of any reward for their apprehension.

THE REPOS' TRADE

An individual wishing to become a repo usually starts by consulting the current Shipping Registry in any large library at A and B starports. The delinquent section lists all ships in the subsector posted delinquent by a financial institution, their last known location, the ship's description and transponder codes, the names of the crew, the value of the vessel, and the institution seeking repossession. Most of these ships are probably being sought by company employees, but there is always a chance that an independent can beat them to it.

An individual with connections (admin-2 or greater) can have access to the "scorched list." This is a list of vessels whose crews have killed one or more repos. These ships often have recovery fees of up to 10% of the ship's value. These vessels are also being sought by law enforcement authorities, who have a low opinion of repos in general and independents in particular. Seeking vessels on the scorched list often involves considerable risk.

Legal Aspects: Legally, company repos are employees of the financial institution holding title to a skipped vessel, and are allowed to take direct possession. Independents are (from a legal standpoint)

ordinary citizens reclaiming another's stolen property, and must immediately turn the ship over to the local authorities. Repos are allowed to use reasonable force to take possession of a skipped vessel, and may defend themselves if attacked, but they are all subject to the murder statutes (even in the case of ships from the scorched list, although judges are often lenient in such cases).

If a ship's cargo belongs to the crew of the skipped vessel, it becomes the property of the financial institution holding the note on the ship. If it belongs to a party unconnected with the skipped vessel (if it has been stolen, or is a contracted cargo), it remains their property.

Repos are not law enforcement officers, and cannot call for assistance from law enforcement agencies. They have no rights over and above ordinary citizens, except for the few they gain if they are employed by the company holding the note on the vessel. They are subject to criminal prosecution for any laws they break in pursuit of a skipped vessel.

Tracking Skips: Tracking is not following physical tracks through space, but the skillful use of available information combined with intuition. An experienced repo will look at the background review conducted by the bank (available automatically if a company repo, otherwise roll 8+, DM admin skill) to see if there are are any specific regions the crew frequents, any preferred business ventures, travel patterns, and so on. Because of the large number of variables, it is impossible to give specific rules for tracking a stolen ship in the space available, so individual referees will have to determine the results according to the situation.

CONCLUSION

Banks and other financial institutions are not suckers. Players who skip out on their payments should spend the rest of their career looking over their shoulder (after all, nobody said life was going to be easy).

Repos should add flavor to any campaign, whether as a new way of making money, or as another thing for your players to worry about as they travel the universe.

— *Jolly R. Blackburn*

continued from page 14

(Cr280,000 each); the cost of adapting such designs to battle dress hardly bears thinking about. A cheaper approach involves the use of sealed motorized vehicles equipped with external mechanical manipulators and capable of operating on land, in a vacuum or underwater to a depth of 2000 meters.

One-passenger vehicles of this type cost Cr30,000, two-passenger vehicles Cr50,000.

Combat: Githiaskio are efficient fighters; in brawling, they can use three tentacles to strike, each as fist −2 for 1D−1 damage, while they can learn the use of most weapon systems, and move quickly underwater. For **Traveller** purposes, underwater combat can be treated as zero-G combat, with weapon ranges severely limited. Naturally, Githiaskio never lose control underwater.

The armed forces of Githiaski are organized on the model of the Imperial army, with modifications as required by the combination of nautical and cavalry functions.

Since their mental processes are so similar to humans, your players should have no great trouble adjusting to Githiaski characters.

— *Phil Masters*

Languages in Traveller

A word innocently uttered in a tavern conversation triggers a major brawl . . . a merchant suddenly becomes insulted and cancels a profitable trading deal . . . a squad of soldiers fails to open fire at a critical moment and a battle is lost.

These and other disasters can result from misunderstandings caused by dialect and language differences as adventurers journey from world to world and interact with the local populations.

LANGUAGES OF THE IMPERIUM

Galanglic, a dialect of Anglic, is the official language of the Imperium. This tongue, which corresponds in many ways to today's general American dialect, is usually widely spoken as a first language only by the general population of major worlds on communications and trade routes.

On other worlds, Galanglic will be spoken to a lesser degree by the local population as a second language. Their first language will either be a different anglic dialect or a totally foreign language. In any case, the more isolated a given world is from trade and communications routes, the more difficult it will be for a visiting adventurer to understand the planet's dominant language. Likewise, the locals will have greater difficulty understanding the adventurers — compounded by the provincial suspicion some isolated societies have for outsiders.

Balkanized worlds may have more than one language spoken among their countries, depending on the world's cultural history. These can be generated by dice throws (see "exceptions" section on balkanized worlds, below), or imposed by the referee.

Note here that we are referring to the general population of a world; the people who live in the hinterland away from the starport. Government officials, starport workers, and merchants in the major population center around the starport will have a working knowledge of

Galanglic, and a party of adventurers should have little language trouble.

If, however, your characters trek across country to purchase a shipment of rare herbs from a village merchant on a backwater agricultural planet, a lack of knowledge of the local language could definitely be a problem.

The effects of language in **Traveller** will show up in modifications to the NPC encounter reaction throw as discussed in **Traveller** Book 3.

Characters will receive a "fluency bonus" of a +1 die roll modification to the NPC encounter reaction throw if this encounter occurs on their home world, in their home nation.

This bonus is lost when characters leave home, and can only be regained for another world or nation if they take language lessons and become fluent in another world's tongue. (See below.)

On other worlds, characters can suffer a language ignorance penalty of from 0 to −3 on the encounter die roll. This penalty is greatly influenced by the tech level of the world, whether it is located on an x-boat route, and the class of the world's starport.

The tech level is an important factor because it reflects the communications and transportation technology available to the local population. The more sophisticated communications systems available on the world, the more easily a widely understood dialect spoken by the interstellar community can be disseminated among and understood by the general population.

A high level of trade and communication between worlds will help prevent the deterioration of the general interstellar dialect spoken on these worlds into more localized and difficult to understand dialects or separate languages.

Starport class designations reflect the frequency of ship traffic carrying cargo, passengers, and information. The more traffic, the greater the need for the world to speak the common interstellar language, and the less trouble adventurers will have communicating with the local population. Worlds located on x-boat routes will have more frequent communications with the interstellar community, which will enhance the use and maintenance of Galanglic on these worlds.

Therefore, when your characters venture to new worlds, check the language matrix included with this article. Cross reference the world's tech level with its starport classification. The result will be either a zero or the language penalty die roll modifier for any encounter throws on that world. If the world is on an x-boat route, add a +1 modifier. However, unless the characters are fluent in the worlds languages or on their home world, the modifier cannot be greater than zero.

Modifiers range from −1 to −3. The first would represent a difference in dialect roughly analogous to the difference between American English and British English. A DM −2 represents a more radical dialect difference. Imagine a Texan speaking with a Liverpudlian, or a Georgia hillbilly speaking with a native of India and you'll get the idea. The −3 represents virtually a different language, akin to the difference between Spanish and Italian.

Even a DM −1 can cause misunderstandings. If an Australian were to call a Texan a "dinkum cobber", for instance, the reaction might be violent.

Aliens represent a special case. Within the Imperium, most aliens working and living in a metropolitan center would have a working knowledge of Galanglic. However, on alien dominated worlds, such as one of the Imperium's Aslan dominated worlds, the language DM would be an automatic −3. This

automatic −3 DM applies to *all* aliens outside the Imperium, including Zhodani.

Mercenary or naval oriented adventurers will also find language differences affecting them.

Mercenary characters cannot apply their leadership skill level bonus to morale saving throws if commanding troops or advising a troop commander (possibly through an interpreter) that speaks a different dialect or language. Characters with tactics skill will also lose their bonus on rolls for surprise as described in Book 1 if commanding or advising a unit speaking a different language.

Orders may be misunderstood or not carried out in a *Striker* miniatures scenario. If a character is commanding or advising a unit that is not from his home world, he will be able to lead normally (as explained in the *Striker* rules). However, when he gives orders, he must roll 7+ on two dice for them to be understood and executed. The language DM that applies to the troops native world should be subtracted from this throw. If the commander fails the understanding throw, the troops must make a morale check as in the *Striker* rules. If they pass the morale check, they will hold their position and behave as low initiative troops regardless of their previous initiative rating until another attempt is made to either issue orders or lead them.

When playing naval campaigns using Book 5, *High Guard* characters who are naval commanders or ship captains lose their fleet or ship tactic skill levels if they are commanding a fleet or ship with a foreign-speaking crew. The language DM for the crew's native world should be subtracted from the "to hit" rolls made on gunnery tables to reflect the disruption in the chain of command caused by language problems.

On the plus side, merchant characters who have acquired skill in a world's foreign language earn a +1 DM when rolling for resale on the speculation table in Book 2.

EXCEPTIONS

There are several exceptions to the general language penalty DM requirement:

Starports: Because people working at starports have so much contact with offworlders, most of them are fluent in Galanglic. Therefore, characters should disregard the language penalty DM for that world during an encounter inside a starport perimeter.

Merchant Characters: Characters who have served in the Merchant service for more than three terms gain a special +1 DM because of the familiarity they have gained with the languages and cultures of worlds where they frequently trade. This special merchant bonus is lost if the merchant character travels to a world outside his or her home subsector.

Balkanized Worlds: Because several different cultures may have evolved on balkanized worlds, or because different areas of balkanized worlds may have been settled by peoples of different ethnic backgrounds, several languages may be spoken on a balkanized world. The effects of this can be resolved either directly by the referee through his or her knowledge of the planet's history or political situation, or by rolling 1D−3 for each nation entered on a balkanized world, other than the nation where the starport is located. The "starport nation" will have the DM indicated on the language matrix.

SKILLS

Certain skills give characters an advantage when dealing with people who speak a foreign language. These include:

Liaison, which reflects prior language training.

Streetwise, a skill that includes the ability to quickly pick up a rudimentary knowledge of the local language and imitate the local accent so as to more easily get along and blend in with the native population.

Broker, (as described in the trade and commerce section of Book 2) applied to rolls on the purchase and resale price table. This skill is also available as part of the enhanced character generation system described in the *Merchant Prince* special supplement published in issue 12 of the Journal.

Trader, also as described in merchant prince.

In addition to any other other previously described effect credited to the above skills, characters may subtract their liaison, Streetwise, Broker, or Trader skill levels from the language penalty DM. (A −3 DM would become −1 if the character had Streetwise − 2.)

LEARNING LANGUAGES

Since learning a new language is a time consuming and expensive process, characters would probably undertake this for the few worlds they would need to visit frequently that have a −3 language DM and rely on interpreters or translators for other −3 worlds.

Languages must be acquired through study with a living or electronic tutor. This learning can be speeded up if the character totally immerses him or herself in the foreign culture and speaks only the new language.

Characters studying a language with a tutor for one hour a day plus reviewing and practicing alone for an additional hour each day will gain a rudimentary knowledge of a given language in six weeks and a working knowledge of a given language in six months. A rudimentary knowledge allows them to add a +1 DM to encounter rolls made on the specific planet where the language is spoken, while a working knowledge allows them to add a +2 DM.

Characters who study a language as outlined above for a year will become fluent on a roll of 6+ on 2D. Those who live in the society as well as study the language become automatically fluent within a year and acquire a working knowledge within three months because of their need to constantly use the language. Note, however, this cultural immersion is not enough to learn a new language; a teacher is also necessary.

Characters with an intelligence rating of 9+ can reduce the above language acquisition times by 25%.

Fluency eliminates all language barrier penalties and restores the "fluency bonus" on reaction throws.

Teachers: Language teachers are generally available for hire in or near major cities on worlds with a population factor of 5 or higher. Private tutoring is typically available for Cr20 an hour. Long term contracts or a class fee for a group of adventurers can be negotiated.

Language teaching computer programs for ship's computers using one point of CPU capacity are available at class A and B starports for worlds in the same subsector, and cost Cr100,000 These programs enable characters to use their ship's computer in place of a live teacher for their daily lessons. Single language programs are available on worlds with a tech level from 8 through 11. Multiple language programs capable of teaching up to six languages (priced at Cr75,000 per language) are available on worlds of TL12+.

Computers must be equipped with speech synthesis and voice recognition modules (TL9+) costing Cr50,000 before they can run language lesson programs.

Translators: Characters who do not have time to learn languages for visits to

distant worlds may decide to employ translators instead. Humans or aliens capable of translating the local planet's language and vice-versa fast enough so characters can hold a conversation with local inhabitants can be hired for Cr150 an hour. Translators who handle only written material can be hired for one third as much.

Language translation computer programs capable of handling written documents are available beginning with TL10. These cost Cr100,000 and take up one point of CPU capacity.

More complex translation programs capable of simultaneous translations between the character's language and one other are available at TL12. These take up two points of CPU capacity and cost Cr300,000. Computers running these programs must operate speech synthesis and voice recognition modules as described above, as well as have a communicator radio link if the translation is to take place at a remote location.

Multiple language programs are available at TL14, use one point of CPU capacity plus one for each language translated, and cost Cr500,000 plus Cr100,000 for each language.

Complete self-contained language translators are available at TL15 and cost Cr200,000. They weigh 1 kg and are worn as a belt or chest pack. Language memory chips are available separately for Cr1,000.

Self-contained translators are battery-powered and can run up to twelve continuous hours on one charge. The user wears a lightweight combination microphone/earphone headset, while a speaker and microphone in the translator pack transmits or receives in the native's language.

Characters expecting to deal with Hivers will have to acquire a special self-contained translator capable of converting human language to the Hiver's gesture "speech" and displaying these symbols on a self-contained screen.

Unless the Hiver has its own voder unit, the symbol translator will only enable the user to have a one-way conversation. Hiver symbol translators are available only on TL15 worlds, and cost Cr50,000.

LANGUAGES

As mentioned earlier, Galanglic is the official language of the Third Imperium. It is a dialect of Anglic, a language that is descended from and pronounced quite a bit like Terran English, which had been the language of the Terran Confederation. Although English is the basis for Anglic, this language has absorbed words from French, German, Russian, Spanish, Japanese, Mandarin, and Vilani. The various dialects of Anglic were spread through Imperial space during the Rule of Man, and Galanglic was developed as an easily pronounced, easily understood general dialect.

Members of the Imperial armed forces are required to speak Galanglic in addition to their native dialect or language.

Galanglic is also the official language of the Solomani Confederation, and variants can be found spoken on worlds of the Darrian Confederation and among the Sword Worlds.

Other Terran descended languages are prominent on many Solomani settled worlds, particularly in the Solomani Rim sector and in the Solomani Confederation. These include Hispanic, Germanic, Slavic, Hindi, Hamitic, and Sino-tibetan languages, in addition to various other tongues carried to the stars by the great waves of emigration from Earth during the Rule of Man. During these emigrations, many peoples left Earth in order to preserve their native cultures, and transplanted their culture and language intact to a new world where it has been preserved to this day. These are referred

to as "pure ethnic" worlds, and have an automatic DM−3.

The dominant language on a given world can often be told from the world's name. As examples, Jarslav in the Albadawi subsector of the Solomani Rim is a slavic speaking world, while Kukulkan's inhabitants speak a variant of a Hispanic language. Examples of pure ethnic worlds include Vyborg, where Finnish is spoken; Oudh, inhabited by Arabic speakers; Thorwald, inhabited by German speakers; Basse Terre, inhabited by French speakers; and Zhongguo, which was originally settled by Mandarin Chinese speakers.

There is another major language spoken in Imperial space that has roots older than the various forms of Anglic. This language is Vilani (the official language of the First Imperium), spoken as a first language on Vilani settled worlds.

A general dialect known as High Vilani is spoken in addition to Galanglic by merchants and business people on most planets which were a part of the Vilani Imperium. Local Vilani based dialects have developed on some of these worlds since they were settled during the first Imperium, and are used by the inhabitants as their everyday tongue. They bear roughly the same relationship to High Vilani as Spanish or French do to Latin.

REFEREE'S NOTE

There are many ways language differences can be used to spice up an adventure. These differences can be a fine vehicle to inject uncertainty and confusion when a campaign has been running too smoothly. Conversely, characters who take the time and meet the expense of learning foreign dialects and languages can be richly rewarded through successful trade deals or by accomplishing diplomatic, political, or military missions where other less skilled individuals have failed.

LANGUAGE DM MATRIX

	Starport type					
Tech Level:	*A*	*B*	*C*	*D*	*E*	*X*
F	0	0	−1	—	—	—
E	0	−1	−1	−1	−2	—
D	−1	−1	−1	−2	−2	—
C	−1	−1	−2	−2	−2	—
B	−1	−2	−2	−2	−3	—
A	−1	−2	−2	−3	−3	−3
9	−2	−2	−3	−3	−3	−3
8	−2	−3	−3	−3	−3	−3
7	−2	−3	−3	−3	−3	−3
6	—	−3	−3	−3	−3	−3
5	—	−3	−3	−3	−3	−3
4	—	—	−3	−3	−3	−3
3	—	—	−3	−3	−3	−3
2	—	—	—	−3	−3	−3
1	—	—	—	−3	−3	−3
0	—	—	—	—	−3	−3

Note: If world on an x-boat route, DM+1.

— Terry McInnes

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submissions, which are handled differently.) The article may reach me, but without an SSAE. The article may have been lost on the way back to you, whether rejected or returned for rewrite. If your article was accepted, the notice may never reach you. Your article may have simply been misplaced (the second law of thermodynamics operates at GDW too).

Please do not expect a detailed critique of what's wrong with your submissions. Each year, I return a large number of articles, and I cannot take the time to write a personal letter for each one. I do not have a secretary. Nobody at the workshop has a secretary (unless you count the Apple II's we use as word crunchers). I must write all my own letters, and each takes time.

Upon acceptance, an article goes into another pile (actually, several drawers in my filing cabinet). From this pile, I choose the articles which will go into each *Journal.* The articles are then typed into our word processors (guess who does this most of the time) and proofread. If the articles is to have an accompanying illustration, a copy goes to Chris, who sends it to the artist. After the errors are corrected, the article is typeset (which means its transferred from the Apple through a maze of wires and black boxes to the typesetter — I do this too) and a preliminary copy run off in long strips called galleys. Chris takes these and the art for them, and designs the pages. I then get the article back and copy-fit it (which means that I fix it so it prints out in its final form). While all this has been going on, I have been soliciting advertisements, deciding how many articles I need to fill up the magazine (always good for some last-minute headaches), and performing the myriad other chores which I have to do. Sometime during this period, the non-article features like FTM, TNS, are written. Towards the end of this process, I start preliminary work on the next issue. When everything is typeset, and all the drawings have been done, the art department (usually Chris) prepares the magazine for the printer. All the type and all the drawings, all the advertisements and everything else have to be pasted into their proper places, in the proper sequence. When this is done, a final proofreading is done before the issue is sent off to the printer. Usually, we catch several mistakes at this stage, and corrections must be typeset and pasted down. Unfortunately, we usually discover the last few mistakes shortly after ths issue has been printed.

I hope you've enjoyed this brief look at how a portion of GDW works. I wrote it in hopes that it would help you understand a little better how we operate.

The results of issue 15's feedback were as follows:

AZ: Chill	4.1
AZ: Drannixa Gambit	3.7
Azun	4.3
TCS Squadron Design II	3.4
Character Generation System Design	3.6
From the Management	3.4
Just Detected	2.8
Traveller News Service	3.7
Casual Encounter: R. Saryavo	3.5
Contact: Ael Yael	4.1
Bestiary: Jabberwock and Eel	4.2
Issue 15 Overall	4.1

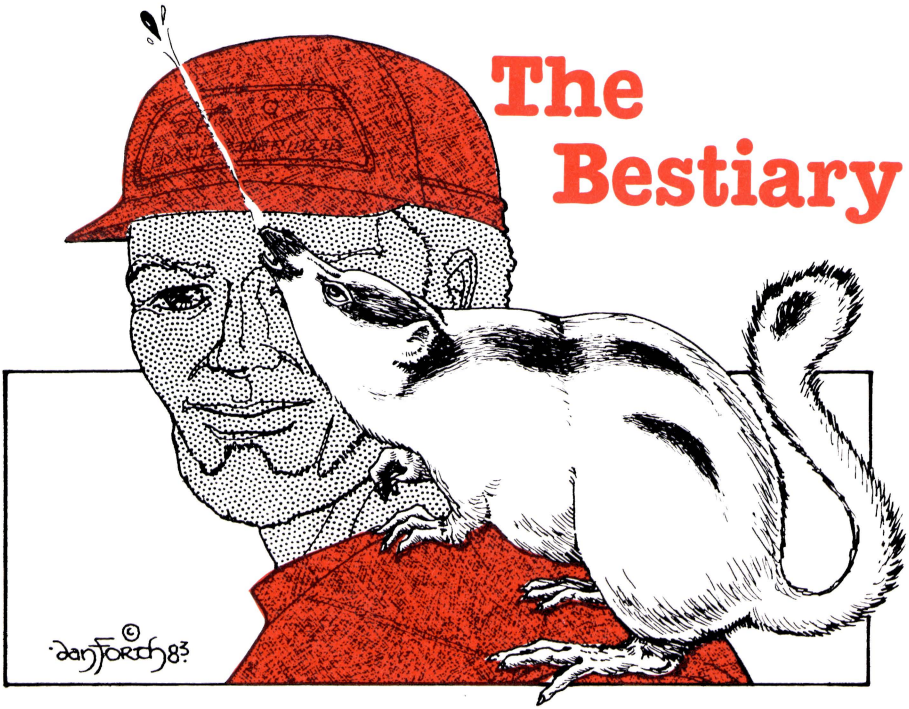
The additional feedback questions for this issue are:

First, If you use the GDW universe, which sector are most of your adventures set in?

Second, Which character generation system do you use most often, Basic Traveller, Mercenary, High Guard, Citizens, etc?

— *Loren K. Wiseman*

The Bestiary



Seedspitter

(Pseudotupaia gigans)

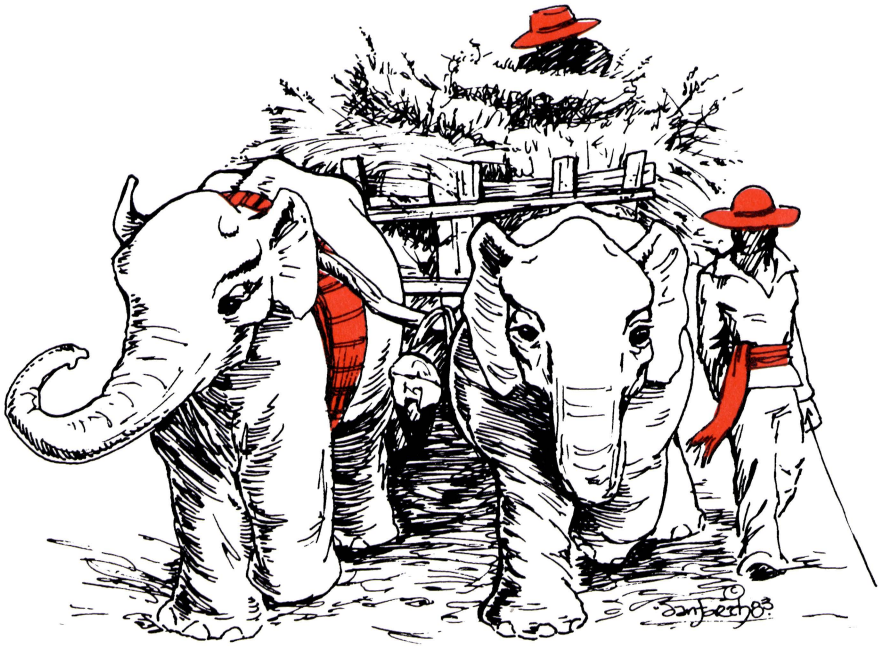
The seedspitter is a small, moderately intelligent animal native to the forests and uplands of certain worlds throughout the Imperium. Externally, the seedspitter resembles the Terran shrew, but is larger, massing about 3 kgs (about the size of a small domestic cat). It has reddish-grey to reddish-brown fur, a domed head and an elongated nose.

At one time the seedspitter secreted an irritant poison similar to a bee's venom into a chamber located behind its upper lip. It would fill this chamber with venom, constrict it rapidly, and squirt the irritant out through an opening in its upper lip, with sufficient force to propel it one or two meters. The irritant could paralyze small animals (a part of the seedspitter's diet).

As time passed, the animal learned to pick up fruit seeds or small stones with its tongue, insert them into its poison cavity, and propel them at predators. In time, the seedspitter developed this skill to the point where it only secreted enough poison to lightly coat the seed and lubricate its passage out of the chamber.

Because of its affectionate nature and its appealing appearance, (the upturned corners of the mouth give the appearance of a perpetual smirk), the seedspitter is a common pet on starships, where it helps in pest control. Seedspitters are easily trained to do tricks such as hitting a target, or "juggling" seeds by repeatedly spitting them into the air, catching them, and spitting them again. Well-trained animals can keep four or five seeds in the air at once.

— *L. Crede Lombard & Jerry Stoddard*



Miniphants

(Microelphas var.)

During the earliest days of expansion into space from Terra, a number of worlds were settled whose terrains challenged the best overland transportation systems. Dense jungle growth and swamplands foiled roadbuilding, and local vegetation sometimes proved nearly unkillable. Since the colonies had (initially at least) very low technologies, one solution to the problem was to use specially bred beasts of burden. These animals could be sent to the colonies in embryonic form, and soon became the low tech alternative to the truck and ATV on many worlds.

One of the animals developed for this program was geneered from the Terran Indian Elephant *(Elphas indicus)*. These beasts were ideal for overland travel in forests and lesser swamps. Later colonies carried the animals to other colonies, and over the years, numerous varieties were developed. The most popular of these are several species collectively referred to as miniphants, so-called because of their smaller size and mass. Miniphants were bred for tractability and high intelligence. They stand an average of 2.05 meters at the shoulder; males weigh 1800 kgs, females weigh 1600 kgs. No tusks are present, but miniphants compensate for this lack when lifting loads by having more powerful trunks. Miniphants have an extremely good sense of smell by nature, and superb hearing, giving them a DM +2 against being surprised. The visual sense is not exceptional, and geneering was only partially successful in eliminating a tendency towards nearsightedness. The grey hide of a miniphant is as tough as cloth armor but is very sensitive to touch. The trunk is even more sensitive and susceptible to injury, but makes a fairly effective manipulative limb.

There is a fair chance of running across miniphants on worlds with tech levels between 0 and 3, and they can be found on some higher tech level worlds in remote and backward regions, employed as cargo handlers, pack and hauling beasts, and mounts. In addition, many worlds keep them in zoological col-

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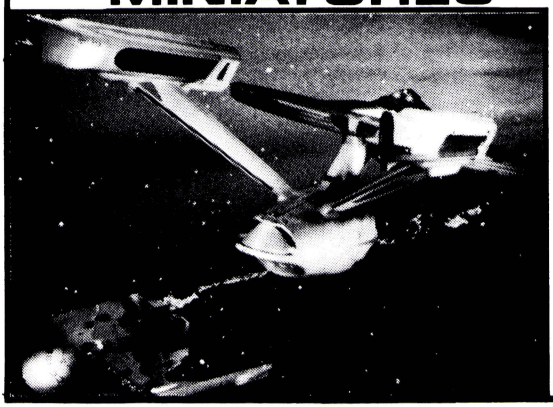

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lections, where they are popular exhibits. The cost of upkeep is about Cr150 per day, including 50 kg of hay and vegetable supplements and 50 liters of water.

Miniphants, like many other elephant species, have some powerful abilities to aid their survival. Though they cannot tolerate cold weather, miniphants adapt well to higher temperatures to the limit of human tolerance. All swim exceptionally well. Their feet are padded in such a way as to permit them to move quite silently (DM +1 to surprise). Because of their foot structure, it is difficult for them to get stuck in the mud; the foot expands when it strikes the ground, and reduces its diameter when lifted.

Miniphants will rarely attack unless wounded or provoked. The usual tactics involve charging the victim and delivering a butt with the head (treat as a club, 4D damage), trampling with the feet (as club+2, 4D damage), or seizing a tree branch or similar object in its trunk and flailing away. A blow from an elephant wielded cudgel, which is larger than a human could use, will strike as a cudgel+1 and do 6D points of damage.

Miniphants can be considered to have an intelligence range of 2-4. While they cannot speak, they can understand spoken commands readily, even when given in whispers. A large number of commands may be learned and will be retained for a long period of time, though few tasks of exceptional complexity will be known. Miniphants make slow but patient learners. They have emotions as humans do, play games and practical jokes, and are amiable.

If used as a pack animal or mount, miniphants can carry up to 350 kgs comfortably or can pull up to 2000 kgs in a wagon or cart.

— *Roger Moore*

Animal	*Weight*	*Hits*	*Armor*	*Wounds*	*Weapons*			
Seedspitter	3kg	0/1	none	1	teeth	F4	A7	S3
Miniphant	1800kg	28/10	jack	14	see above	F5	A6	S1

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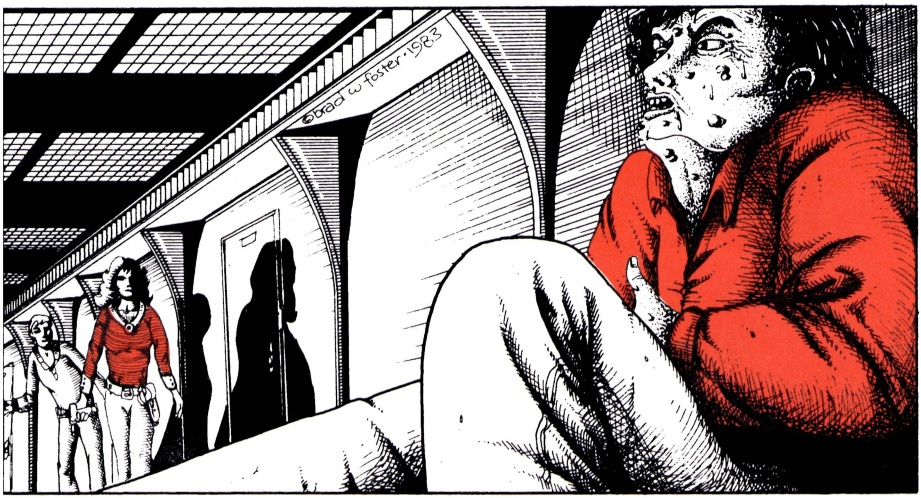


Players' Information:

Purfyr is a remote agricultural world (C–867645–A) off the main trade routes, but visited occasionally by merchant ships trading for gourmet foods, wines, and pharmaceutical plant extracts. The adventurers are the crew of such a ship and have just concluded three weeks of negotiations with the local merchants' association, eventually making an unexpectedly good deal.

Amber Zone

Accordingly, they have spent the night celebrating, and stayed overnight in the best hotel in the city.

In the morning, when the team meets for breakfast in their suite, they gradually notice that something is wrong. Room service fails to answer when called and the old-fashioned electric lights are flickering slightly. After a few minutes someone remembers that there is a radio in the next room, and switches it on to hear a tense, almost panic-stricken voice:

". . . and government sources stated that martial law will be imposed for the duration of the crisis. Starport authorities have announced a total quarantine, as has the scout base. So far, there have been six serious incidents and an estimated sixty deaths in the capital since the discovery of . . ."

With these words, the lights give a final flicker and go out, and the radio stops working. Through the window a pall of smoke is visible, rising from the direction of the main power station.

Referee's Information:

When the group leaves the suite, they will find that the staff has deserted the building, leaving many rooms empty and apparently ransacked. For each floor of the hotel searched, roll two dice; if the roll is under or equal to six, there are no occupants; if higher than six, the remainder indicates the number of occupants (for example, a roll of 8 indicates two occupants, since 8−6=2). It should be remembered that the lifts are inoperative, and the suite is on the eighteenth floor. For each person discovered, roll two dice; on a roll of seven or more the person is aware of the epidemic; on a roll of ten or eleven, the person is a carrier, and on a roll of twelve, the person exhibits the final phase of symptoms. If any victim shows the terminal symptoms, they will already be insane on a roll of 5+.

Purfyr is experiencing an outbreak of the glowing plague, which is a viral form of the ancient genetic disease iron deficiency Porphyria. The disease was developed years ago by one of the world's nation-states as a biological weapon, and basically interferes with the body's ability to manufacture hemoglobin by preventing iron from being absorbed into the manufacturing process. Side effects include insanity, build-up of porphyrins in the skin (which may lead to skin tumors, and make exposure to sunlight extremely painful), shrinking gums (which cause the teeth to ''lengthen'') and (in some cases) erupting facial hair. Victims feel a craving for iron rich organics, and in the depths of their dementia may turn to drinking blood or to cannibalism. The accumulation of porphyrin compounds in the skin causes the skin to fluoresce under ultraviolet light, hence the name of the disease. Death usually occurs within 80 to 120 hours after the onset of the extreme symptoms, caused by lack of hemoglobin.

The disease was originally a genetic disorder, but recombinant genetic experimentation resulted in the production of an airborne viral form. After a two-week incubation period (in the last week of which the victim can spread the disease by breath, excretions, or physical contact), visible symptoms develop over a few hours. First signs are the eruption of skin tumors and extreme pain upon exposure to bright lights.

A vaccine is available, but it is in short supply, and will require time to synthesize a large supply. In any case, the vaccine will only prevent onset of the disease, but will rarely cure it. Immediate whole blood transfusions will arrest the progress of the disease for 48 to 72 hours. The reason for the resurgence of the disease should be determined by the referee. One of the secret biological warfare laboratories could have been discovered and the virus inadvertently released. Terrorists might have gotten hold of a quantity of the virus. A corporation or government agency might have been conducting illegal experiments with the virus which got out of control.

For each contact with a plague carrier or terminal victim, there is a chance of infection, with the disease contracted on a roll of 4 or less. Allow DMs −2 for endurance 5 or less; −1 for each hour (or fraction thereof) of exposure; −1 for strength 4 or less; −3 if touched or bitten; +1 if strength 9 or higher; +1 for endurance 10 or higher. In the first 48 hours of infection, victims can be cured if they are inoculated with the proper vaccine. If no vaccine is found (see below), a spontaneous cure will result on an 8+ the first week, a 11+ the second week, and a 12+ once the terminal stage begins at the end of the second week. Allow +1 DM per 2 levels of medical skill. For each hour of the terminal stage, throw 5+ to avoid insanity.

Government reaction to the plague involves three main policies:

1) A mass vaccination program to inoculate everyone on the planet. The vaccination gives a +8 DM on rolls against infection, and a +3 on the survival roll if administered in the first week. It will take six days for the vaccine to become readily available; before that time, roll 14 exactly to locate a single dose. This roll may be made once per day. Allow DMs of +1 per level of streetwise, medical, and/or liaison.

2) Martial law has been declared. The police and army will patrol all areas, and can arrest or shoot all looters and other criminals. All restaurants and food shops have been closed, with food being issued from mobile canteens to registered adults (see below), the young, and the elderly.

3) All adults age 18 to 50 must register at a police station, hospital, or local government office, and will be assigned to one or another form of emergency work. The registration process includes vaccination and a ration card. Anyone in this age group failing to register is liable to arrest. Those registering will be assigned to various departments, listed in order of priority:

a) Medical: Anyone with medical skill or relevant scientific training will be assigned to duty in a hospital, mobile vaccination unit, or research unit.

b) Police/Army: Those with weapons skill 2+, or army or marine backgrounds will be assigned to aid a police or army unit.

c) Decontamination: Characters with vacc suit 1+ may be assigned to a mobile fumigation unit, decontaminating premises believed contaminated with the plague.

d) Transport: Those with a ground vehicle skill may be assigned to a transport unit, moving supplies where they are needed.

e) Miscellaneous: Anyone left will be assigned to an appropriate job, eg. mobile canteen cook, power station engineer, hospital porter, and so on.

For each separate character or group of characters, one encounter should be rolled per day of the emergency. En-

continued on page 45

For all the logic and simplicity of the *Striker* combat system, there are two fairly minor areas which are not completely satisfying.

The first area is the conversion of *Striker* damage levels to the point system of **Traveller**, and the second is the *Striker* "to hit" determination at short ranges. The purpose of this article is to suggest two modest changes which will hopefully help bridge the gap between *Striker* and **Traveller**.

A tacit assumption of *Striker* is that damage is conjoint with penetration value. In most cases this is so, but a problem arises with certain weapons, especially when the target is armored. Consider, for example, a shotgun or a snub pistol firing an HE round. The penetration value of each of these weapons is only 1 because of the low velocities of the projectiles, and in the case of the shotgun pellets, because of their low individual masses. And yet, a shotgun (at short range, at least) has a devastating effect, and certainly an explosive round detonating against or within a human body would be equally deadly. Against an armored target, the low penetration is appropriate to generate the damage also, but what if the target is unarmored?

As an example, consider a completely average **Traveller** character whose UPP is 777777 and who is hit by a slug from a rifle (penetration value 3) and an HE round fired from a snub pistol (penetration value 1), each at effective range. What is the chance of causing a serious wound using each of the two combat

Merging the Striker and Traveller Combat Systyems

systems? In *Striker*, a serious wound requires a roll of 8+ on the damage table, so with a penetration of 3, only 5+ is necessary; a probability of 83% with the rifle, but only 58% with the HE round (DM of +1 for penetration yields a 58% probability for 7+). The rifle is considerably more deadly. Under the **Traveller** system, a rifle does 3D of damage and an HE round does 4D. A serious wound would require 14 points of damage for our target, yielding a probability of 16% for the rifle and 55.6% for the HE round. Clearly at close ranges HE or a shotgun should be at least equal to a rifle, and in **Traveller** they are indeed somewhat more lethal. It should be noted also that the 3D/6D damage system suggested in volume II of *Striker* does not solve the problem, as the rifle is now likely to cause twice as much damage as the other two. To correct this kind of situation, the following adjustments are suggested:

1) Separate the penetration and damage determination into two dice rolls using penetration and armor values as given in *Striker* but retaining weapon damage values used in **Traveller** and *Mercenary.*

2) Modify the damage table in *Striker* so that instead of damage levels it yields the amount of damage absorbed by the target's armor as a negative DM *per die* of damage. The modified table is shown below.

Damage Table

Die Roll	*Damage DM per die*
3 or less	−6 (no damage)
4	−5
5	−4
6	−3
7	−2
8	−1
9 or more	0

A DM of 0 indicates that armor is in effective. If the target is unarmored, penetration is assumed to be automatic and no penetration roll is necessary.

As an illustration, let us return to our average character once again, this time allowing him cloth armor (armor value 5). Once hit by a rifle round, a roll is made on the penetration table yielding a 6, and so a damage DM of −3 on each die of damage. Next, 3D are rolled giving 5, 4, and 4, which are modified to 2, 1, and 1 (note that 0 is a minimum; negative values are not allowed), thus reducing a total damage of 13 (which would have produced unconsciousness and very nearly a serious wound) to only 4 (a minor wound).

Admittedly, the modifications listed above require an extra roll of the dice, but only if the target is armored, and they do provide a simple link between the logical armor treatment of *Striker* and the player characteristics of **Traveller**. In actual play, the extra roll has not been a problem. In addition, this system allows the *Striker* rules to be used in animal attacks, and a similar transformation to the one above could easily be performed on the *Striker* melee table, although this will not be discussed here.

By its own admission, *Striker* is designed to deal with fairly large scale actions fought at moderate-to-long ranges. At the short ranges of many **Traveller** firefights however, confined as they often are within starships and barrooms, the *Striker* hit determination tables become somewhat unrealistic. That an 8+ is required to hit a target only two meters away seems unlikely. Also, the difficulty of using long arms at very short range is not addressed. Once again, only a slight modification is required. At close and short range (contact and 1 to 5 meters, respectively) the target DM's from **Traveller** are used, penetration is as at effective range. Above 5 meters not many *Striker* values are used. Note that

armor DMs for "none" are used regardless of armor actually worn, since armor is dealt with as described above. As an example, the range/penetration characteristics of a 9mm autopistol and a tech 8 laser rifle are shown below.

It is hoped that these changes will allow referees to utilize the best of both combat systems without adding too much complication to the flow of play.

Autopistol				*Damage*		
Range (meters)	C	5	10	40	90	3D
To Hit (penet)	6(1)	5(1)	8(1)	10(1)	12(1)	

Laser Rifle				*Damage*		
Range (meters)	C	5	10	40	90	5D
To Hit (penet)	9(9)	3(9)	8(9)	10(4)	12(1)	

— *Michael L. Wharton*

continued from page 42

counters may be on a face-to-face basis or may be events which affect the characters more or less indirectly. An encounter occurs on a roll of 8+, which may be made once daily. The referee should determine the nature of these encounters or events depending on individual circumstances.

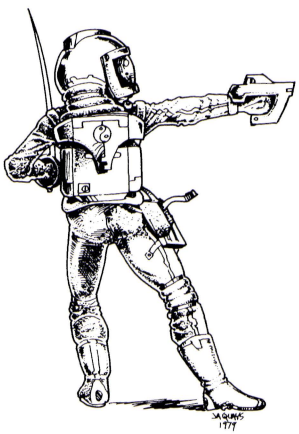
If players wish to attempt to get off-world, or to hide out in the country for the duration of the epidemic, the referee should make a saving roll of 4+ for each character. If this roll is failed, the character is already infected, and is in day 2D+1 of the disease. Such attempts may well lead to arrest.

Players who wish to try traditional "treatments" for the infection can be allowed to discover that garlic causes victims some discomfort, but no immediate injury (certain compounds in garlic accelerate the effect of the disease); stakes through the heart will kill the victims (or anyone else) and are used with a −5 skill penalty, and with the same armor, range, and strength modifiers as a bayonet. The characters will discover all normal weapons have normal effect, and that holy water, crucifixes and mirrors are totally ineffective. How the characters go about locating holy water and/or crucifixes is left to the referee's imagination.

If the characters stay in the city for the duration of the epidemic (D6+1 weeks + 3 weeks quarantine) and aid the emergency services, they will be paid 2D6 thousand credits per person (in promissary notes, payable in one year) as compensation for their trouble, and they may be paid bonuses for outstanding heroism.

If characters are caught looting or committing other crimes (hoarding food, forging ration cards, etc.), they may be executed with a minimal military trial (roll of 4 or less), but are more likely to be sentenced to 3D6 years in the planetary prison.

— *Marcus Rowland*



Casual Encounter: Fast "Johnny" McRae

Jon "Fast Jonny" McRae is wanted on at least ten worlds, under a number of different names, for crimes ranging from Grand Theft to impersonating an Imperial Military Officer. A fast-talking, free-wheeling con man, McRae is engaging and likeable, even to the victims of his elaborate (and usually expensive) scams.

Jonny lives well, and enjoys life to the fullest. Wherever he goes, he finds the best foods, the finest wines, and the most beautiful women. This taste for high living is costly, and cuts into the profits of his operations, but McRae is content to work a little longer to recover his expenses. Actually, McRae's swindles are carried off more as a game than as a necessity; Jonny's mercurial temperament and dislike of boredom and inactivity lead him to devising elaborate cons even when he has no immediate need for cash.

Certain scams are regular favorites, used frequently. One is to pose as an inspector employed by some merchant line or consulting firm (or, on one notable occasion, as a member of the IISS security branch), deadheading his way from one system to another under the guise of conducting a "safety procedures examination." Similarly, he has been known to eat magnificent multi-course meals in fine restaurants, while allowing staff members to think he is the restaurant reviewer from some local news service — thus getting the meal free, and fine service to boot. These, however, are just petty games "to keep my hand in" as Jonny puts it.

His real cons are much bigger in scope. McRae has been known to steal, and later sell, small starships. Often his victims haven't realized they've been had for weeks. McRae's adventures often net him millions of credits from a single sting . . . which he goes through in a remarkably short time, often financing a new operation.

His smooth, polished manner and great personal charm make McRae a convincing individual. A victim once said of McRae, "He could talk a centaur into taking a job as an elevator operator!" Young, good-looking, and utterly disarm-

Rogue/Con Artist

Jon McRae 8B7B64 Age 34 4 terms Cr varies

Forgery-3, Streetwise-2, Bribery-1 Body Pistol

ing in his appearance, Jonny is a great ladies' man; his success often allows him to latch on to wealthy, well-connected women and bilk them of large fortunes, or use their influence to help him in one of his schemes.

Adventurers may encounter "Fast Jonny" McRae under a variety of circumstances. Usually, he will approach them in an attempt to con them, or to use them as unknowing dupes in some elaborate scam. Should this happen, he will be quite convincing, and the characters will have a great deal of trouble resisting his advances.

This is the general rule, in fact, in all situations involving Jonny McRae. He always attempts to dominate his surroundings, and never tells the truth if he can fabricate a convincing story of some sort instead. Even those who are aware of his reputation often find themselves being taken in by Jonny's charming manner and powers of persuasion.

Other situations involving the players with McRae can be of interest in a campaign or adventure. For instance, McRae could be running from the law, or from some powerful individual he has just swindled. Jonny could approach the players with some elaborate story or phony job offer, hoping to use them to get him off-world or distract the pursuit. As a result, those pursuing Jonny can end up chasing the adventurers as well.

Jonny may also involve the characters in a really big scam. For example, he might hire them as crew for a starship — which they later realize was stolen. This, too, could put the party in a bad position.

On the other hand, the group might be hired by the law, by a private individual, or even by the local mob, to help track Jonny down and trap him. Another possibility is that the group will be caught in the crossfire when Jonny's luck runs out, and his enemies finally run him down.

"Fast Jonny" is brilliant at changing identities. His skill at forgery and his years of experience and travel have enabled him to build up a large collection of false ID papers. McRae is also good at changing his appearance (both with and without make-up), and is a talented actor and mimic.

Among his many aliases, Jonny is most fond of one: Commodore Laruskaa Korkoran, IN. McRae has built up the identity carefully over the years, and has exercised care to keep Korkoran's name clear of the scams he has indulged in. As the commodore, McRae has an iron-clad protection from suspicion. Korkoran's record shows him to be brilliant (an Academy honors graduate), a war hero, and a trusted officer. Where records could not easily be faked, McRae has carefully covered his trail by associating Korkoran with places, people, and events not easily checked.

Among his papers McRae has a warrant identifying Korkoran as an Inspector-General on a roving commission to investigate naval affairs. Because the character of Korkoran is above suspicion, McRae often uses him as cover for escapes; as yet the deception has never been discovered.

Jonny McRae is wanted and considered dangerous. A Cr25,000 reward is offered by Imperial authorities for his arrest (in connection with the time he posed as a Marine colonel to gain access to records of a mineral survey on Prometheus, one of his few failures).

Other rewards are in effect from various governments, and some wealthy criminal leaders have taken out contracts on him as well.

In actual fact, though McRae carries a weapon he is quite reluctant to use it, and is far more likely to use his wits and words than force in any tight corner.

— J. Andrew Keith & Tim Kokkelenberg

The following are now available or will be soon after the appearance of this issue:

Best of the Journal, (volume III), our anthology of material from the *Journal of the Travellers' Aid Society* issues 9, 10, 11, and 12. *Supplement 12, Forms and Charts* is a collection of record-keeping forms (revised and updated) from those that have appeared on the protective wrapper of subscriber copies of the *Journal of the Travellers' Aid Society,* along with several totally new forms. In addition, a number of blank ID cards have been included to serve as props in adventures, or for other use by players to add spice to their **Traveller** gaming.

The following items for **Traveller** will be available during the summer:

Supplement 13, *Veterans* contains some 170 characters pregenerated using the Book 4, *Mercenary* character generation system. Due for release at Origins.

Boxed Module 1, *Tarsus* is set on a world in District 268 of the Spinward Marches. The module elaborates on the world's Universal Planetary Profile to show the diversity possible on a single planet. Several adventure scenarios are presented which reveal or utilize different aspects of the planet. Due in July.

The Traveller Adventure has been encountering difficulties for some time now, but the final manuscript is (at last) in our hands and ready for typesetting. It is scheduled for publication at Origins, but the art department still has to accomplish several minor miracles, so stay tuned.

On the non-**Traveller** front for the spring and summer: *The Brotherhood* (a Mobster boardgame), *Campaign Trail* (a presidential election boardgame), *Dark Nebula* (reissued in a new box), *Assault* (modern tactical combat in Europe), *Blue Max* (a WWI aerial combat boardgame), *Normandy Campaign* (a WWII boardgame), and *The Near East* (an Europa module).

Next Issue:

Special supplement 2, *Atmospheres.* A rundown of exotic, insidious, and corrosive atmospheres, how they affect you, and how you can keep from being affected by them.

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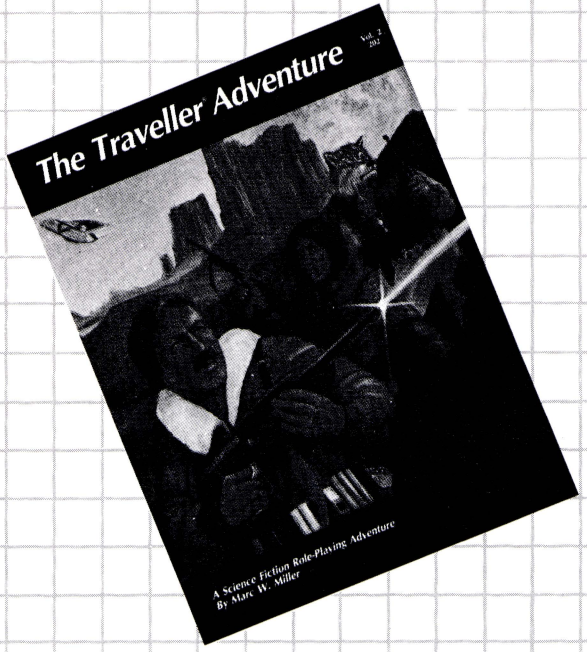
The Traveller® Adventure



When the crew of the merchant vessel *March Harrier* befriends a shaggy, wolf-like alien Vargr in the underground city of Leedor, they have no reason to suspect that they are beginning a quest for the secret of a jewelled alien ornament . . . a quest that will take them to an asteroid mining settlement, to frontier trading stations, and to dozens of exotic worlds. But the ornament is intended for more than mere decoration, and the adventuring crew is soon marked by the extra-legal security apparatus of the giant Tukera Lines megacorporation. From the teeming underground warrens of Leedor, to the cold and lonely asteroid belt and the trade routes between systems — the crew and their Vargr companion need every skill at their disposal to discover the true secret of the ornament.

The Traveller Adventure is a 128-page hardcover volume filled with all new *Traveller* action and excitement. The book is a valuable addition to any *Traveller* library, compatible with any *Traveller* rules set. $14.00

Other new *Traveller* publications are **Starter Edition Traveller**, **Library Data N-Z** (Supplement 11), **Nomads of the World-Ocean** (Adventure 9), and issue 15 of **The Journal of the Travellers' Aid Society.**

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